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IMPLEMENTATION OF OPERATIONS IN SPAIN-PORTUGAL CROSS-BORDER FREE ROUTE AIRSPACE (ESPORTFRA) – PHASE 1

CANCEL AIC INT 01/22.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this AIC is to inform on Phase 1 implementation of Spain and Portugal Cross-Border Free Route Airspace (ESPORTFRA), which operations will be effective 14 May 2026.

2. INTRODUCTION

In order to meet the requirements of the Regulation (EU) No 116/2021 (Common Project One), which requires cross-border FRA with at least one neighbouring state, as well as following the European Route Network Improvement Plan (ERNIP), ENAIRE and NAV Portugal facilitates Cross-border Free Route Airspace ESPORTFRA, as it will be published in AIP ESPAÑA and AIP PORTUGAL.

The main aim of ESPORTFRA is to provide better solutions for airspace design, new airspace operating concepts and enhanced operational performance from a pan-European view, not just from a regional perspective.

Implementation of ESPORTFRA Phase 1 determines the initial stage of this process, establishing a single cross-border FRA area for subsequent phases, which will progressively eliminate the structural limitations of the different ESPORTFRA cells. These additional phases will be deployed as the technical functionalities in the ATC system that support free-routing operations are implemented, specifically the tactical conflict detection tool in Spain or the functionality that allows the exchange of flight intent data and online data sharing between Spain and Portugal.

3. APPLICABILITY

The availability, lateral and vertical limits of ESPORTFRA will be published in ENR 2.2.

The ESPORTFRA operational availability is planned H24.

3.1. Lateral limits

The ESPORTFRA concept will cover the horizontal boundaries of three “free route” cells (see attachment):

- Cell 1: horizontal boundaries in MADRID/BARCELONA UIR, considering the delegation of ATS provision of LPPC/LECM/LECS (published in ENR 2.2) for the internal border with Cell 2.

- Cell 2: horizontal boundaries in LISBOA FIR, considering the delegation of ATS provision of LPPC/LECM/LECS (published in ENR 2.2) for the internal border with Cell 1.
- Cell 3: coinciding with the horizontal boundaries of CANARIAS UIR Part I.

3.2. Vertical limits

The vertical limits of ESPORTFRA (see attachment) are:

- Cells 1 and 2 in UIR MADRID/BARCELONA and LISBOA FIR: FL245 to FL660.
- Cell 3 in UIR CANARIAS: FL305 to FL660.

3.3. Eligible Flights

Flights eligible for FRA operations are those that plan at least one leg of their route within the limits of the ESPORTFRA area (lateral and vertical limits) set out in AIP-ESPAÑA and AIP-PORTUGAL ENR 2.2.

4. FLIGHT PLANNING PROCEDURES

4.1. General Procedures

In ESPORTFRA, operators will be able to freely plan a route between a FRA area entry point (be it a horizontal entry (E) or an aerodrome exit (D)) and a FRA area exit point (be it a horizontal exit (X) or aerodrome arrival (A)) with the possibility to route via FRA intermediate points (I), without a reference to the ATS route network, subject to airspace availability.

There is no limitation on the number of FRA Intermediate points used in ESPORTFRA cell 2 within LISBOA FIR.

Only defined 5-letters name codes (5LNC) in section ENR 4.4 (NAME-CODE DESIGNATORS FOR SIGNIFICANT POINTS) or an en-route radio navigation aid as published in section ENR 4.1 (RADIO NAVIGATION AIDS - EN-ROUTE), with FRA relevance in AIP ESPAÑA and AIP PORTUGAL, shall be used for flight planning in ESPORTFRA.

The use of unpublished FRA Intermediate points, defined by geographical coordinates or by bearing and distance in the FPL ITEM 15, is forbidden in ESPORTFRA, except for the ESPORTFRA cell 2 within LISBOA FIR where, for speed and level changes in item 15 of the FPL and only for this purpose, operators may additionally use LAT/LONG coordinates.

Flights will be able to transit to/from ESPORTFRA cells 1 & 3 within MADRID/BARCELONA/CANARIAS UIR, through the route structure, to/from an intermediate FRA point within these cells.

Segments between FRA Significant points will be indicated by "DCT" acronym in Item 15 of the flight plan, in accordance with ICAO Doc 4444, and shall remain fully contained within published ESPORTFRA area.

Example: [Entry Point] DCT [Intermediate Point] DCT [Intermediate Point] DCT [Exit Point].

The planning of DCT segments that are partially outside the lateral limits of ESPORTFRA without using the proper Entry/Exit points (multiple re-entry segments) will not be allowed.

Planning of DCT segments:

- Crossing the ESPORTFRA border (i.e. cross-border DCT to another FRA zone outside of ESPORTFRA) is not permitted.
- Crossing the internal boundary between ESPORTFRA cells, these segments must plan via the published intermediate points.

Flight planning is not permitted through active reserved airspace (ARES) in ESPORTFRA cells 1 & 3, unless otherwise stated in European Airspace Use Plan/Updated Use Plan (EAUP/EUUP) through the application of restrictions in accordance with ENR1.10 "Adherence to the Route Availability Document (RAD)".

4.2. ATS Route Network

- Cells 1 and 3 within UIR MADRID/BARCELONA/CANARY ISLANDS, for those users who prefer to submit their flight plans in the traditional way or who are not eligible for FRA operations or for emergency situations, the ATS route network published in AIP-ESPAÑA ENR 3 will remain available.
- Cell 2 within LISBOA FIR, in the event of a contingency, a reduced ATS route structure above FL245 would apply as defined in AIP PORTUGAL ENR 2.2 "CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN LISBON ACC (CONFLICT FREE ALLOCATION SCHEME)".

4.3. Flight Level Orientation

For the expression of the Direction of Cruising Level the terms ODD or EVEN will be used. The parity rule published in AIP ENR 1.7 applies. The proper significant point Flight Level Orientation will be expressed in sections ENR 4.1 and ENR 4.4, to match with adjacent FRA areas parity and general coordination procedures between the ACCs involved. In ESPORTFRA Phase 1, the flight level orientation at the border between FRA cells remains published in ENR 4.1/4.4.

4.4. Route Availability Document

Restrictions on the availability for flight planning are promulgated in accordance with AIP-ESPAÑA ENR1.10 "Adherence to the Route Availability Document (RAD)".

5. AIP-ESPAÑA

AIP sections affected by ESPORTFRA in AIP ESPAÑA, can be found below:

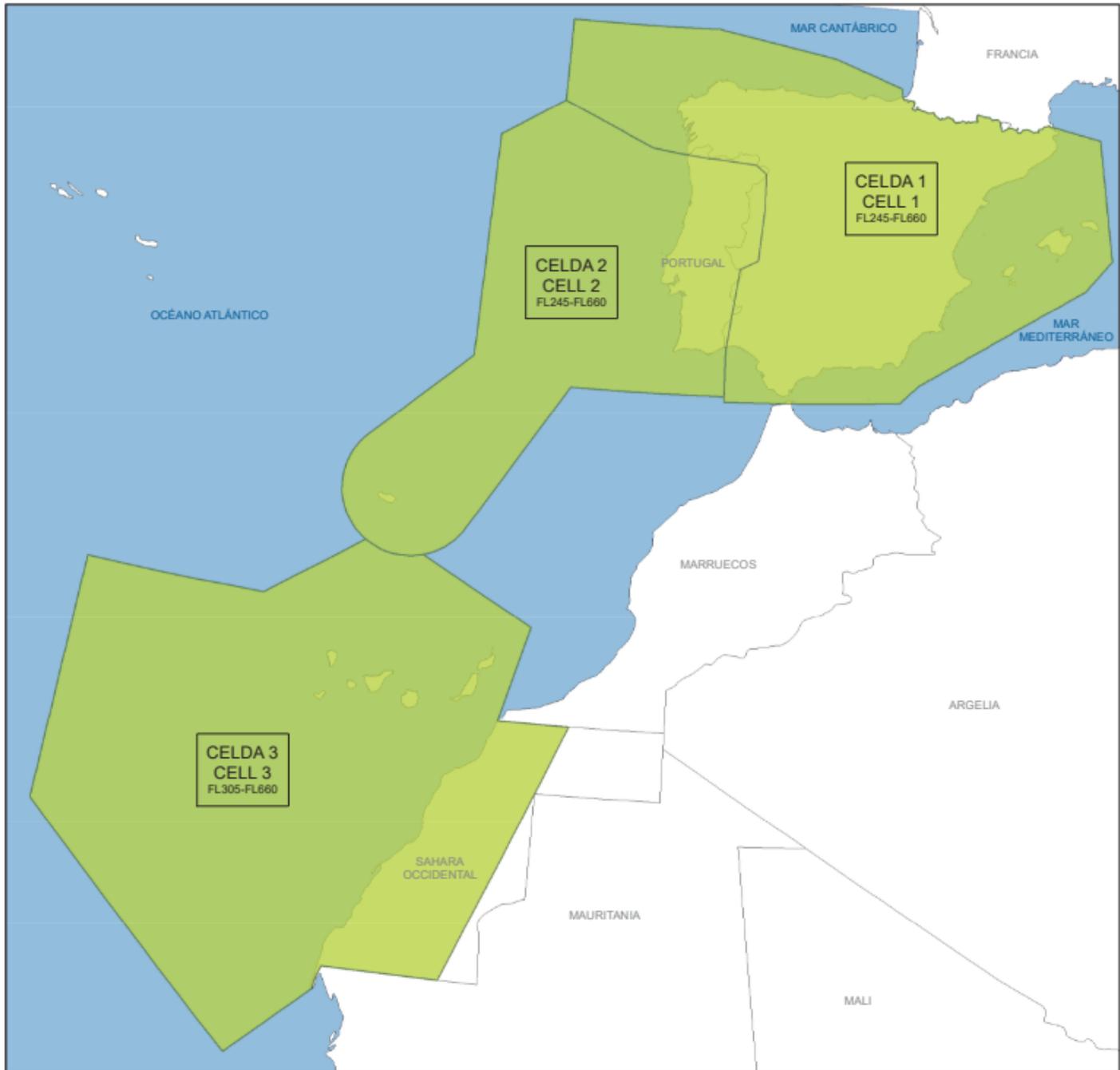
- GEN 2.2 – FRA acronyms.
- ENR 1.3 – FRA - General Procedures:
 - Area of application
 - FRA Procedures:

- General.
- Overflying traffic.
- Access to/from airports and Terminal Airspaces.
- Cross-Border Applications.
- Airspace Reservation - Special Areas:
 - Re-routing Special Areas.
 - Promulgation of route extension (if needed).
- Additional FRA procedures:
 - Flight Planning When Transiting to/from Aerodromes Located Within the Madrid-Barcelona FIR and Canarias FIR.
- Route Availability Document.
- Further information / Contact details.
- ENR 1.10 – FRA Flight Planning.
 - FRA Flight Planning procedures not published in ENR 1.3 (if needed).
- ENR 2.2 – FRA area definition.
- ENR 3.3 – FRA connecting routes (if necessary).
- ENR 4.1 / ENR 4.4 – FRA significant points.
- ENR 5.1 / ENR 5.2 – FRA FBZ (if necessary).
- ENR 6 – FRA Charts.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be found on the ENAIRE free route website:

https://www.enaire.es/servicios/gestion_de_transito_aereo/free_route



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