



Safety recommendation no. 575

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| Date of the publication | 31.05.2022 |
| Number of the final report | 2377 |
| Safety deficit | <p>In good weather, in class E airspace, a business jet following a standard instrument departure from Sion airport came dangerously close to a single-engine turbine aircraft cruising at flight level (FL) 150 and flying under Visual Flight Rules (VFR). The climbing aircraft was in radio contact with the Geneva Air Traffic Control INS (INI South), the cruising aircraft with the Geneva Flight Information Center (FIC). The potential conflict was indicated by the Short Term Conflict Alert (STCA) of the air traffic services and traffic information was transmitted to the pilots of both aircraft. Neither pilot was able to have a visual contact to the threat. The twin-engine aircraft was below the minimum surveillance altitudes and the RE INS controller was therefore not authorized to perform a radar guidance to resolve the potential conflict. The business jet's Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) issued corrective Resolution Advisories (RA), which the flight crew correctly followed. The aircraft passed within 0.4 NM horizontally and 675 feet vertically of each other. At no time did the pilots, air traffic controllers and FIC operator violate the rules of the air.</p> |
| Safety recommendation | <p>The Federal Office for Civil Aviation (FOCA) should reconsider the classification of the airspace affected by IFR arrivals and departures from Sion, so that all flights operating there can be managed by the air traffic control service.</p> |
| Addressees | BAZL Bundesamt für Zivilluftfahrt; BAZL Bundesamt für Zivilluftfahrt |
| Stage of the implementation | <p>Implemented – In its letter of 25 October 2022, the FOCA takes the following position: "The FOCA partially agrees with the safety recommendation. (...) When analysing the situation, the air traffic controller sent a "conflict" to the other sector, this seems to be due to the lack of rules and procedures between the different ATS units and the fact that several units are working in the same airspace, but with another type of traffic (IFR, VFR, MIL). This is also confirmed by the results of the report of Skyguide's « task force E ». 'This taskforce E also concludes that a resectorisation and adaptation of procedures (e.g. definition of working methods for the area and not just for one aircraft, a single 'Area of Responsibility') is necessary.' The other incidents mentioned in the report might confuse the reader of the report in such a way that he/she might assume that a dangerous environment prevails around Sion airport. However, the amount of information related to these incidents is not sufficient to justify a safety-based modification of the ATM system (mainly airspace; according to SE). The FOCA has already carried out a safety assessment of this particular airspace in 2020, taking into account traffic figures. The situation has been assessed for the time being as 'Tolerable M/7 [S5]' [major accident with expected fatalities,</p> |

life changing injuries (7-19) or major aircraft destroyed, with a probability of 1 in 10 million air movements]. A change for the better may improve the safety situation, but it does not primarily mean a change in airspace. A change in the responsibilities of the ATS organisations involved could be a much more effective way of improving the situation in that particular airspace (adhering to the one airspace, one frequency "rule" and developing clear coordination and handover procedures for "transfer of control" and "transfer of communication"). Skyguide's taskforce E reached similar conclusions for this region.

With a view to the future, Sion Airport is currently developing new instrument flight procedures (IFPs). Once these IFPs have been completed, Sion's airspace will be adapted accordingly, based on the airspace design principles prescribed in the CH ADP and a safety assessment of the new situation. As part of the safety work, the entire ATM system in this region will be assessed, not just the airspace structure as such, which means that the ATSS and their respective areas of responsibility will also be examined. It is planned to implement the new AIFs and related amendments in March 2024. The FOCA plans to issue a further opinion on the status of the implementation of Safety Recommendation 575 in due course."

In its letter of 22 April 2025, the FOCA takes the following position: "During the last quarter of 2023, the FOCA reviewed the above risk assessment and came to the same conclusion as before. This means that the situation around Sion is satisfactory for the time being and no immediate action is required. In the coming years, certain instrument flight procedures at Sion will be modified or newly designed, for which a complete revision of the airspace is planned. This will involve not only reviewing the airspace, but also assessing the areas of responsibility of the ATS units concerned. The changes at Sion were planned for 2024 but have been postponed to 2025 due to staff shortages at Skyguide. In the meantime, Sion Airport plans to implement all instrument flight procedures for approach by March 2027. The airspace and corresponding ATM procedures must be developed to meet this deadline. The AD ET team has already included this change in its work program. During the modification and development of the procedures, a risk analysis will be conducted in parallel to determine the necessity and extent of a TMA. The FOCA considers that all the risk analyses carried out and the future work related to the new flight procedures and possible changes to the airspace meet the recommendation to reconsider the airspace for take-offs and landings at Sion. The FOCA therefore considers Safety Recommendation No. 575 to be closed."

**Investigation report concerning
the safety recommendation**

Rapport final
Rapport de première information
