



Final Report of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau

concerning the incident (Airprox)

between BAW730 and an unidentified traffic

on 7th July 1998

Geneva Airport Terminal Control Area

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BUREAU

FINAL REPORT

AIR TRAFFIC INCIDENT REPORT (ATIR)

AIRPROX (NEAR COLLISION)

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT PREVENTION. THE LEGAL ASSESSMENT OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT CAUSES AND CIRCUMSTANCES IS NO CONCERN OF THE INCIDENT INVESTIGATION
(ART. 24 OF THE AIR NAVIGATION LAW)

PLACE	Geneva airport Terminal Control Area
DATE/TIME	7 July 1998 / 1614 UTC
AIRCRAFT	1. BAW 730, Boeing 757, London Heathrow - Geneva 2. Unidentified traffic

ATC SERVICE	APPROACH CONTROL
ATC CONTROLLER	APPROACH
AIRSPACE CATEGORY	E

HISTORY

On Tuesday 7 July 1998 at 16:14 UTC, British Airways flight BA 730 from London Heathrow to Geneva, a Boeing 757 under radar guidance of Geneva approach control, is descending to flight level 090 in the approach sector class E airspace, outside the terminal control area. During the descent, when the aircraft passes flight level 097, it crosses very close to traffic unknown to the approach control services and invisible to radar. The pilot then proceeds to take avoiding action by climbing back up to flight level 100. He informs the controller that he has crossed a glider at very close distance. The controller informs the pilot that the unknown aircraft is passing through E space. The pilot submits an ATIR.

FINDINGS

- The aircraft was under radar control, under the jurisdiction of Geneva approach control, on frequency 131.320 MHz.
- The aircraft was on intermediate approach en route towards SPR/VOR.
- During the intermediate approach over French territory, in the delegated space, the aircraft was in class D airspace as far as flight level 115.
- For 1 minute it penetrated French class E airspace, from flight level 115 to flight level 103.
- The aircraft entered airspace over Swiss territory at flight level 103, outside the terminal control area.
- The aircraft was on an EAST heading, authorised initially to descend to flight level 100.
- Until flight level 100, i.e. for 1 minute 20 seconds, the aircraft was in class C airspace.
- The aircraft was re-authorised to descend to flight level 090.
- At 16:14:00, the aircraft left flight level 100 and entered class E airspace.
- The incident took place at 16:14:25 at a distance 6.5 NM north-north-west of SPR/VOR outside the Geneva terminal control region, in class E airspace.
- The weather conditions were VMC, visual flight with more than 10 km visibility.
- According to the pilot's ATIR report, the unknown aircraft was a white Pilatus glider, seen at 10 o'clock, 1 NM and 200 ft below.
- The pilot initiated an evasive procedure by climbing back up to flight level 100.
- The pilot reported the incident to the controller and submitted an ATIR.
- The controller informed the pilot that he was in class E airspace.
- The aircraft continued its approach and landed.

ANALYSIS

The encounter between the BAW730 commercial aircraft and the unknown traffic took place in class E public airspace, on Swiss territory, outside the terminal control area. The services provided by approach control in this airspace are ATC services and traffic information concerning VFR flights, as far as possible.

The unknown traffic involved in this incident was not visible to radar (primary or secondary) and could not therefore be reported to the pilot by the controller. It is paradoxical that IFR traffic manoeuvring in the vicinity of Geneva airport during

intermediate approach, in areas with dense IFR approach and departure traffic, must fly through an airspace class E, where numerous known and unknown VFR traffic are operating without control.

CAUSE

The incident is due to the presence of an unknown (uncontrolled) VFR traffic operating in an airspace class E, during the approach of a commercial flight.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION

Flights conducted in accordance with the instrument flight rules (IFR) should not operate within airspace class E.

Bern, 30 May 2001

Swiss Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau