

## Diplomatic Clearances information paper – Nov 2013

### Aim

The aim is to provide an information sheet containing an overview of the DIC TA issue as well as a one-pager to the AHWG Representatives to be forwarded to all relevant national diplomatic clearances actors. Both documents give basic information regarding the Diplomatic Clearances TA (DIC TA) and its consequences to be known by everyone.

It is important that - when required - the necessary guidance is provided together with the documents in order to raise the awareness of the people and to allow a better implementation of the DIC TA.

### Background

The European Air Transport Fleet partnership signed by 20 Member States in 2011 under the auspices of the European Defence Agency is looking at augmenting the availability of military airlift in the EU and developing concrete solutions to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. In this framework, a particular area of improvement concerned the freedom of movement of EU military registered transport aircraft transiting the national boundaries within EU. The disparate requirements to obtain diplomatic clearances to land in or to fly over EU member states caused delays and in fact hampered swift airlift operations. This legacy mechanism needed to be tailored to the 21st century's requirements, especially looking at the future implementation of the Single European Sky (SES) in the coming years, where a route driven system will evolve into a trajectory driven system.

The DIC TA was signed on 19 Nov 2012 by 11 nations (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden) and Italy and Lithuania signed later on. The Technical Arrangement is effective since 1<sup>st</sup> June 2013.

All DIC TA signatories engaged themselves to implement a unified format for DIC notification and request named European Union Diplomatic Clearance Form. All DIC TA signatories engaged themselves to use implement a unified format for DIC notification and request named European Union Diplomatic Clearance Form. After the national implementation all DIC TA signatories will accept only this form for DIC notifications and requests, ideally not only for transport aircraft, but for all military flights and aircraft types in order to replace all the existing forms and NOT to implement just an additional form for air transport. It is signatories' obligation (DIC issuing offices) to inform potential requestors (most likely the foreign embassies/attaché staffs) about this new form to be used and to update the respective regulation(s). The implementation of the form is not limited to the signatories. It would be even more appreciated, if nations, who could not sign the TA, will implement the common form. They don't have to commit to anything

more, but would contribute to European harmonization and common recognition for the outside world

Regarding signature, participants could sign up for two options limited for the time being to military air transport: Option 1 issues a yearly DIC number for most military air transport missions and applies Harmonised Procedures to handle DIC for overflights and landings of participants' military transport aircraft in their respective national airspace or territory. Option 2 only applies the Harmonised Procedures and was merely an option for those participants eager to sign before the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2013 but were short on staffing time.

Detailed information are in the DIC TA. Main points for Option 1 are:

1. An Annual DIC is issued for a calendar year starting January 1st of each year to allow signatories to fly over each other country's territory and to land at and take-off from military and civilian airports. The Annual DIC is valid for all transportation missions, carrying all types of cargo (excluding ICAO/IATA non-compliant dangerous goods), including support to any operation.
2. Besides the rules depicted in the DIC TA, aircrew have to adhere to all national rules, international agreements, ICAO rules, restrictions described in the national military and civilian Aeronautical Information Publications, ATC regulations, NOTAMs or other special requirements.
3. During the missions covered by the DIC TA, any type of ISTAR and/or EW equipment as well as Defensive Aids Sub Systems will be put in "OFF", "INACTIVE", "SAFE" or "STAND-BY" mode.
4. When using the Annual DIC, the DIC number will be mentioned in item 18 of the ICAO Flight Plan. Additionally, the Participants will notify the flights as follows:
  - Flights with VIP on board: not required for overflights, NLT 1 working day before ETD for landings.
  - Flights with ICAO/IATA compliant DG: not required for overflights or landings.
  - For aircraft carrying ISTAR and EW equipment: NLT 1 working day before ETD
  - For all other flights: no notification required.
5. Flights with ICAO/IATA non-compliant dangerous goods are not covered by the Annual DIC and require a DIC request following bilateral ("normal" procedures").

### Direct benefit of the DIC TA

Common arrangements and harmonised procedures for overflights and landings of EU nations military registered or operated transport aircraft enables signatory member states to operate without the need to submit DIC requests for each flight since a yearly DIC number is issued for most of the flights. This common European DIC mechanism increases efficiency and effectiveness of European airlift as there is more flexibility during mission preparation, mission execution and especially within the trouble shooting process. Furthermore it saves human and financial resources of the member states with a significantly reduced number of required requests/notifications.

### DIC Portal

The DIC Portal is meant to serve as an information tool. Its main purpose is to provide for basic transparency on national policies and procedures for granting diplomatic clearances for military transport aircraft according to the DIC TA. The data at the web-page is provided by the signatories and gives the required information as depicted in the DIC TA. However, this data is for information purposes only and is by no means of a legal nature.

The portal is accessible through <http://eda.europa.eu/DICPortal/default.aspx>.

The DIC Portal consists of a main page providing basic information on the DIC initiative, including links to other relevant information and basic documents, and a number of country tabs containing respective information, national policies and procedures. One can proceed for research for information with the respective nation using the respective links and contact data.

The DIC Portal offers the unique opportunity to find on a single portal relevant information regarding diplomatic clearances from all EDA participating Member States and those Schengen area nations that signed the DIC TA or that are willing to provide information.

It has to be noted, that the DIC Portal does not act as a provider of information on its own behalf but is a platform for Participants to distribute respective information in a shortened and harmonised way. For full and authentic information, one should always have to refer to the respective national documents.

### Potential restrictions regarding yearly DIC

Certain nations made the yearly DIC number available for all airports, others only for military or only for civilian airports and some only for a couple of airports. This information is to be found on the portal. In no cases though the portal provides information on the existence of PPR's (Prior Permission Required) for specific airports. This information needs to be gathered in civilian and military AIPs or other national documents.

Few nations that signed up for the option 1 insisted on having certain areas requiring a specific DIC number and hence excluding the yearly clearance number to be valid for those exempted areas.

An Office of Prime Responsibility (OPR) is also provided as a DIC focal point and is the main office dealing with DIC which has to be contacted for DIC requests, notifications or any other issue dealing with DIC.

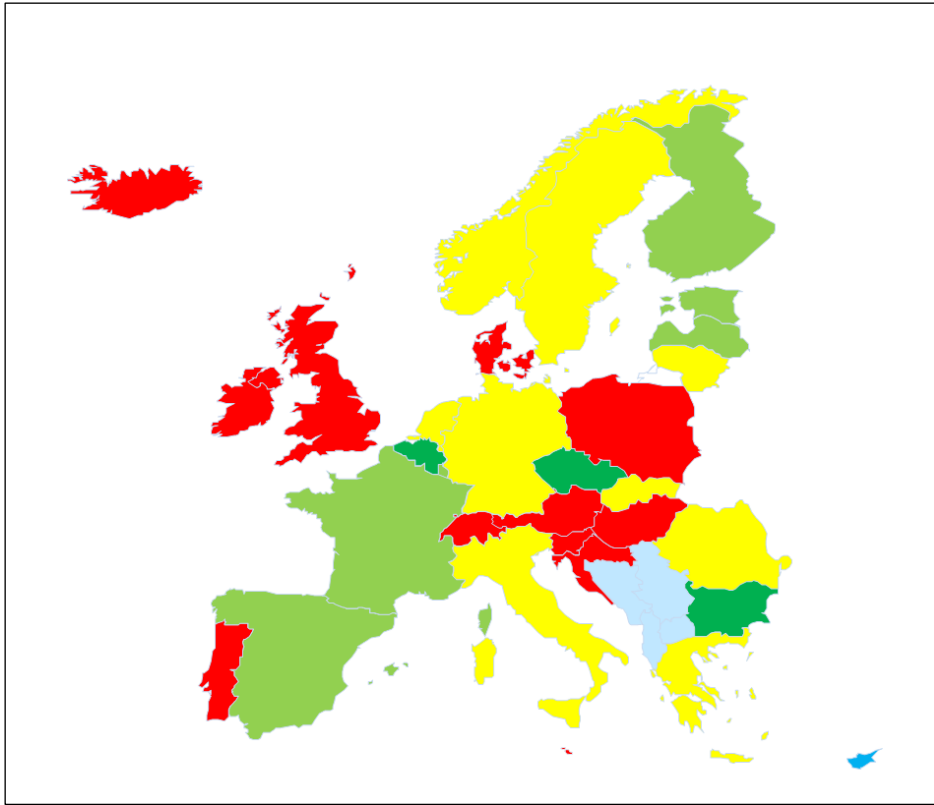
Participants could also have some specific reasons to suspend (temporarily) the annual DIC number. In this case they will inform all other Participants on specific reservations they could make on a particular operation (or other missions) and hereby suspend temporarily the annual DIC until further notice. A procedure for this is described in the DIC TA.

Participants could also have potentially (temporary) caveats regarding the application of the DIC TA. A specific space on the portal is dedicated to those caveats.

#### DIC TA signature situation (Oct 2012)

The following figure illustrates the current state of play of the DIC TA signature:

- Colour code:
  - DARK GREEN: Participant that signed up for option 1 and hereby issued a yearly DIC number to be used without restrictions.
  - LIGHT GREEN: DIC TA signature is under staffing.
  - YELLOW: Participant that signed up for option 1 and hereby issued a yearly DIC number to be used with restrictions.
  - BLUE: Participant that signed up for option 2 and hereby only harmonized their existing rules & regulations.
  - RED: member state didn't sign the DIC TA.
    - Showed interest: PL, UK
    - Still to be targeted: CH, DK, HR, IS
    - Not going to sign (for the moment): AT, IE, MT, PT



### Conclusions

In order to make the new DIC mechanism work, all diplomatic clearances actors of the signatory nations need to be aware about the content of the DIC TA and the consequences it has on the simplification and harmonisation of the EU DIC rules and regulations.

Since DIC is a bi-lateral issue it is massively important that signatories implement the DIC TA at least midterm in the same way in order to follow the reciprocity principle.

### One-pager

**Aim of the DIC TA:** to issue a yearly Diplomatic Clearance Number (DCN) for most (>95%) of the signatories' military transport aircraft missions.

**Signatories (Oct 2013):** Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden.

**Background:** to simplify and harmonise a legacy DIC mechanism in Europe.

**Implementation:** 01 June 2013.

#### **Main points of the Diplomatic Clearance Technical Arrangement (DIC TA):**

- An Annual DCN is issued for a calendar year starting January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, valid for all transportation missions, carrying all types of cargo (excluding ICAO/IATA non-compliant dangerous goods) and including support to any operation.
- When using the Annual DIC, the DIC number will be mentioned in item 18 of the ICAO Flight Plan. Additionally, the Participants will notify the flights as follows:
  - Flights with VIP on board: not required for overflights, NLT 1 working day before ETD for landings.
  - For aircraft carrying ISTAR and EW equipment: NLT 1 working day before ETD
  - Flights with ICAO/IATA compliant DG: not required for overflights or landings.
  - For all other flights: no notification required.
- Flights with ICAO/IATA non-compliant DG are not covered by the Annual DIC.

**Consequences:** drastic decrease in amount of DIC requests and notification, thus saving time as well as human and financial resources. In addition, increase of flexibility for mission planning and execution.

**Portal:** a web-based DIC portal provides all DIC TA information, including reservations. The portal is accessible through <http://eda.europa.eu/DICPortal/default.aspx>.

**EU DIC form:** a unified format for DIC notification and request for all types of military flights and aircraft (preferably to be used by all EU nations) was created to replace the existing 28 different forms. DIC TA signatories engaged themselves to implement the EU DIC Form as a receiver of any request. The main aim is harmonization but automated (ICT) creation and processing will also become possible.