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Partial implementation of RECAT-EU Wake Turbulence Separation Scheme

1. Introduction

The wake turbulence separation minima currently used in Austria are based on the ICAO Doc 4444 PANS-ATM and follow the ICAO Wake turbulence categories of aircraft.

In October 2014, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) informed EU Member States that the RECAT-EU Wake Turbulence Separation scheme safety case report provides the assurance that the RECAT-EU wake turbulence separation scheme can be used to update the current wake turbulence scheme.

This aeronautical information circular introduces those parts of the RECAT-EU scheme which will be implemented by Austro Control within its area of responsibility and explains the implementation conditions at the dedicated airports and their consequences for users.

2. RECAT-EU categories of aircraft

The ICAO Document 4444 PANS-ATM wake turbulence scheme only contains three categories of aircraft, HEAVY (H), MEDIUM (M) and LIGHT (L), all based on the maximum certificated take-off mass criterion. Then a new category, SUPER JUMBO (J) has been added to take into account the A380-800.

The RECAT-EU wake turbulence scheme introduces two subcategories for heavy and medium aircraft. It also integrates the super jumbo category. The categories SUPER HEAVY, UPPER HEAVY, LOWER HEAVY, UPPER MEDIUM, LOWER MEDIUM and LIGHT are based on both the maximum certificated take-off mass (MTOM) and the wing span.

Austro Control will only implement those parts of RECAT-EU that are related to distance based separation minima between common UPPER HEAVY, LOWER HEAVY and UPPER MEDIUM aircraft types and only during arrival phases of flight.

Note: The Table in 6.1. provide the relevant RECAT-EU categories and belonging aircraft types currently in operation at Austrian airports.

3. RECAT-EU Wake Turbulence Separation Minima

The RECAT-EU Separation scheme allows the definition of lower separation minima thanks to a better tuning of aircraft categories. In most cases, the RECAT-EU separation minima are lower than the ones defined by ICAO for wake turbulence.

The relevant changes in separation minima for the implementation are:

Leader aircraft	Follower aircraft	ICAO Minimum	RECAT-EU Minimum
B76x, B75x, A310	A318-A321, B736-B739, B75x	5 NM	3 NM
	All ICAO Heavy	4 NM	3 NM
Leader aircraft	Follower aircraft	ICAO Minimum	RECAT-EU Minimum
All ICAO Heavy (except B76x, B75x, A310)	A318-A321, B736-B739, B75x	5 NM	4 NM

The relevant RECAT-EU separation minima are also presented in 6.2.

4. RECAT-EU Separation Minima Implementation

The relevant parts of the RECAT-EU wake turbulence separation minima based on distance are implemented at all Austrian airports from April 27th 2018 at 00h00 UTC. These minima are applied for arrival phase only.

For take-off phase, the wake turbulence separation minima based on time as per ICAO 4444 PANS-ATM document remain unchanged.

5. Impact on pilot procedures

The implementation of RECAT separation minima will not affect the pilot procedures.

Nothing is changed in flight planning and flight management.

Nevertheless, as separation minima will be reduced in most cases, pilots are advised to pay attention to the following points:

5.1. Approach phase

Pilots might notice the separation reduction by experiencing higher induced roll moments from preceding traffic on final approach.

For a functioning approach ATM system it is imperative that pilots maintain the speeds on the final approach as assigned by ATC. If for any reason, these speeds cannot be maintained pilots shall inform ATC as soon as practicable.

5.2. Runway occupation

Pilots are asked to minimize runway occupancy time. Due to reduced separation minima on final approach, it is mandatory that landing aircraft vacate the runway as early as possible in order to maintain runway capacity.

5.3. Flight plan and phraseology

Implementation of RECAT-EU scheme does not change the way to fill in the flight plan or phraseology.

Pilots will continue to fill in the flight plan wake turbulence case 9 with the ICAO aircraft category, H, M or L, and J for super jumbo.

It is neither necessary nor required for pilot to know the RECAT-EU category of their aircraft.

6. Tables

6.1. Relevant RECAT-EU categories

UPPER HEAVY	LOWER HEAVY	UPPER MEDIUM
B777*	B757*	B736 – B739**
B747*	B767*	
B787*		A318 – A321***
	A310*	
A340*		
A330*		
A350*		
* all current types	* all current types	** incl. MAX versions *** incl. NEO versions

6.2. Relevant RECAT-EU separation minima

Leader aircraft	Follower aircraft	RECAT-EU Minimum
Upper Heavy	Lower Heavy Upper Medium	4 NM
Lower Heavy	Upper Medium	3 NM

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