

# 3 QUESTIONS TO JOHAN DECUYPER

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## **IN 2017 THE AVIATION SECTOR EXPERIENCED A GROWTH SPURT. HOW DID THAT EVOLUTION AFFECT BELGOCONTROL?**

With over 33 million passengers at the Belgian airports and 1.3 million tons of freight, 2017 was a record year for the whole aviation sector in our country indeed. Belgocontrol also recorded a rise in traffic volume: the total amount of flight movements increased by over 3% compared to 2016. That increase positively affected the major airports, but especially the en-route traffic (overflights above Belgium). Despite the extremely complex nature of the Belgian airspace, Belgocontrol manages to keep it safe, attractive and competitive for users across the world. We co-operate with all our customers and partners so as to constantly improve our service provision and to support all actors in their development.

The results of Belgocontrol regarding safety, our n° 1 priority, are excellent once again. We also keep investing in our systems and our staff so as to ensure the continuity of our quality services.

## **2017 CAN ALSO BE CONSIDERED THE YEAR OF THE PARTNERSHIPS FOR BELGOCONTROL. CAN YOU NAME A COUPLE THAT YOU SPECIFICALLY REMEMBER?**

First of all, there was the cooperation agreement that the Ministers of Defence and Mobility have signed. After years of negotiating, that cooperation will ensure that the civil and military air traffic controllers work together on the same Belgocontrol site in Steenokkerzeel by the end of 2019. That rapprochement shall lead to a more flexible use of airspace and will result in a win-win situation for all users, both civil and military.

Since November 2017 Belgocontrol is active at a sixth airport in Belgium because it extended its existing range of air navigation services to Kortrijk. Thanks to that collaboration, the airport was able to perform IFR flights again and it will be able to further roll out its activities in the future.

In 2017 there was another first in the history of our company: Belgocontrol entered into a joint venture agreement with Entry



Johan Decuyper  
CEO

Point North, a Scandinavian company that is specialized in aviation training. I also wish to mention the partnerships we struck with the universities of Brussels, Louvain and Antwerp, with which we have launched research projects in our domain of activity – combining economy and ecology, well-being at work, etc. – furthermore, I would like to highlight the closer professional connections we made with the Administration de la Navigation aérienne of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Last but not least, Belgocontrol is in close contact with the wind power industry in order to strengthen the development of renewable energy in Belgium. And let's not forget to mention the fact that I have been made president of the group of FABEC CEOs at the end of 2017 (FABEC is the common airspace that groups Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany, France and Switzerland).

### **WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE FOR BELGOCONTROL IN 2018?**

We have three axes in our brand-new corporate strategy: to strengthen the ties with our customers, to tighten the bond

with our staff and to build a company that is able to tackle the challenges of tomorrow. We use those axes as our common thread to continue to invest in our systems and our staff. That way, we can continuously improve and keep providing the best services. Safety remains our top priority, followed by continuity and capacity, but we wish to offer more innovative services as well: by integrating drones in the airspace – Belgocontrol has launched the digital platform and the droneguide.be app – , by studying the concept of digital towers – those studies are ongoing, for the Flemish as well as for the Walloon regional airports – and by constantly reinforcing cyber security so as to ensure the safety of our operations at all times. And let's not forget that Belgocontrol will celebrate its twentieth anniversary in 2018! We might well have a surprise or two in store for that occasion ...