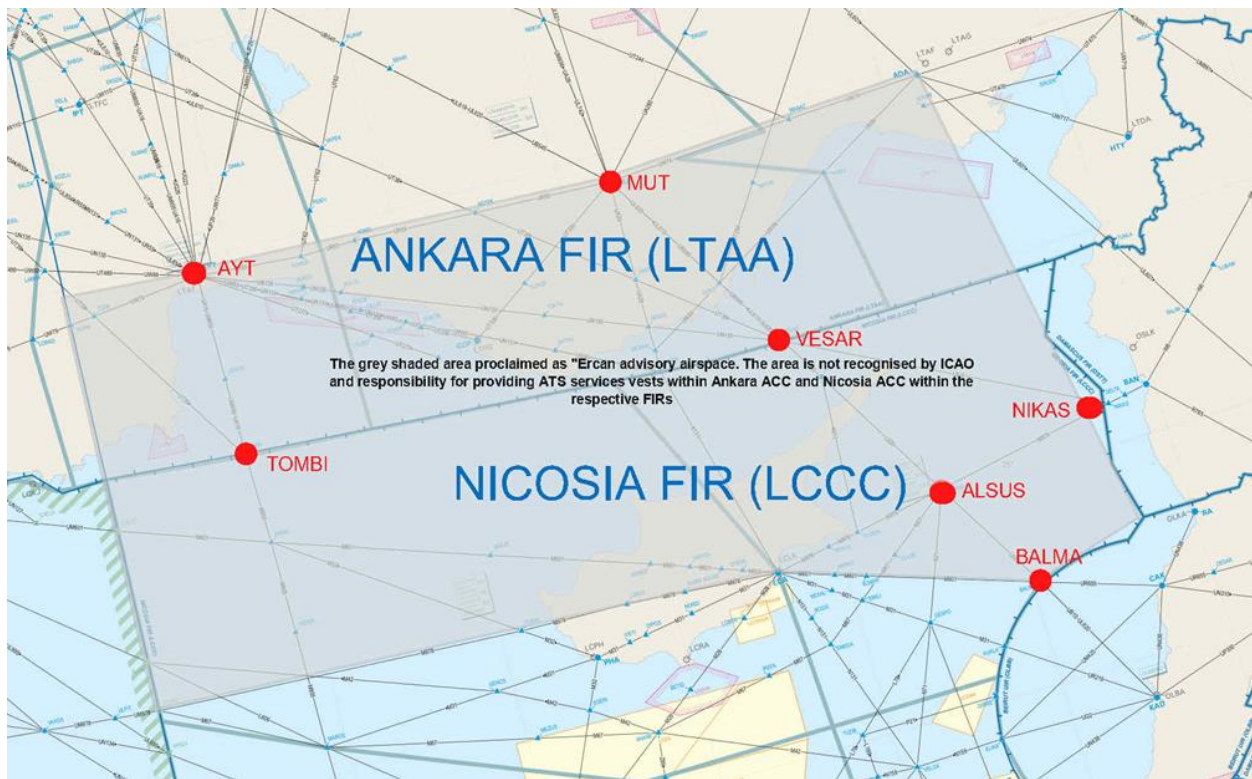


# Ankara-Nicosia FIR Boundary



*The grey shaded area proclaimed as "Ercan advisory airspace. The area is not recognised by ICAO and responsibility for providing ATS services rests with Ankara ACC and Nicosia ACC within the respective FIRs.*

## BACKGROUND

In 1974, Türkiye unilaterally established the "ERCAN Advisory Area" to exercise air traffic control in the northern part of the Nicosia FIR/UIR and parts of the south-western section of the Ankara FIR/UIR.

"ERCAN" is not recognized by ICAO as a controlling station (the only official ICAO FIR boundaries being those between the Nicosia FIR, Ankara FIR, and the surrounding FIRs), but intervenes in the Nicosia FIR and issues ATC clearances which are not coordinated with adjacent ATC centers, such as Beirut and Damascus, and usually conflict with clearances issued by Nicosia ACC. Moreover, there is no direct communication between Ankara ACC and Nicosia ACC for the coordination of transiting traffic between the two FIRs.

This worrying situation has created hazards which are detrimental to flight safety, and has already resulted in numerous ATC-related incidents which were highlighted in a recent study by EASA. Examples of such incidents include conflicting ATC instructions and FL allocations, uncoordinated transfer of traffic, and unknown military activity in proximity of civilian traffic.

Most of the time, these incidents involved flight crews not flying through this particular airspace on a regular basis, and unaware of its specific procedures.

This has led IFALPA to classify the Ankara-Nicosia FIR boundary as "deficient". Pilots operating in the area should ensure that every ATC incident is reported to the appropriate ATC centre.

## PROCEDURES

To ensure flight safety around the Ankara-Nicosia FIR boundary, pilots should familiarize themselves with the following procedures:

### General

- Regardless of the flight path, pilots should maintain contact with Nicosia ACC throughout the duration of their transit in the Nicosia FIR.
- When operating in the Northern portion of the Nicosia FIR, coming from or flying to Ankara FIR, pilots may contact "ERCAN" for information purposes but, as mentioned above, maintain contact with Nicosia ACC.
- Requests for re-clearance within the Nicosia FIR should only be addressed to Nicosia ACC. Clearances, instructions, FL changes and other instructions issued by "ERCAN" should NOT be accepted unless approved by Nicosia ACC.
- When entering Nicosia FIR, aircraft should maintain their current Mode-C transponder code and ensure that Mode-S is ON. If no transponder code was previously assigned, aircraft should use code 2000 until otherwise instructed by Nicosia ACC. Additionally pilots should connect with Nicosia ACC using CPDLC (log on address LCCC) to minimise the risk of a non-communication.

### Flying Southbound

- In Ankara FIR, comply with ATC instructions issued by Ankara ACC, either directly or through any other station designated by Ankara, including "ERCAN" on 126.70 MHz up to point VESAR (B545) or point TOMBI (VA16). Nicosia ACC requires that aircraft approaching Nicosia FIR/UIR from Ankara FIR make pre-entry contact **at least 10 minutes before the FIR boundary**. For practical purposes such communications should be established before crossing over AYT or MUT. It is essential that crews

comply with this requirement to enable Nicosia ACC to assume control and provide appropriate traffic separation.

- Once contact is established and flight details (including FL) information is passed to Nicosia ACC, avoid making requests to Ankara ACC for FL changes for the rest of the flight through Ankara FIR, unless climbing from or descending to aerodromes in the immediate vicinity of the FIR boundary. If, for any reason, it becomes absolutely necessary to make FL changes whilst still in Ankara FIR, Nicosia ACC should be advised at once of the change.
- At VESAR or TOMBI, flights will come under the sole control of Nicosia ACC. Remember that there is no direct communication between Ankara ACC and Nicosia ACC.
- Once within the Nicosia FIR, flights should ONLY accept control instructions issued by Nicosia ACC until handover to the next ATC Unit or FIR/UIR.

### **Flying Northbound**

- As there is no contact between Nicosia ACC and Ankara ACC, advance flight information can only be provided to Ankara by relay through "ERCAN". **At least 10 minutes prior to entering** Ankara FIR, provide information to "ERCAN" on 126.70 for relay to Ankara, but remember that ATC authority from Nicosia ACC remains absolute up to the point of entry into Ankara FIR (VESAR or TOMBI).

### **Eastbound / Westbound**

- Eastbound aircraft entering Damascus FIR are required to establish contact with Damascus ACC 10 minutes before ETA at NIKAS. If for any reason this is not possible, aircraft must provide a position report to Latakia Radio, a relay station for Damascus ACC, at VESAR, ALSUS, or BALMA for relay to Damascus. Even if a position report and flight details have been communicated to Latakia Radio, two-way communications with Damascus ACC should be established as early as possible. Nicosia ACC remains primary station for listening watch until NIKAS where you can expect to be transferred to Damascus ACC.
- Westbound aircraft flying from the Damascus FIR should establish contact with Nicosia at the FIR boundary (NIKAS) unless requested by Damascus ACC to call Nicosia earlier.
- Aircraft planning to continue into the Ankara FIR should follow the "Flying Northbound" procedure described above.