

Greek Aviation Chief Resigns After Athens Air Traffic Blackout

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Giorgos Saunatsos, governor of the Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), has resigned following a major communications blackout that disrupted air traffic across the Athens Flight Information Region earlier this month.

Greek national broadcaster ERT reported that the resignation was accepted by Minister of Infrastructure and Transport Christos Dimas. Giorgos Vagenas, deputy commander of air navigation, has been appointed to temporarily assume the duties of CAA head while procedures are underway to appoint a permanent successor.

The incident occurred on January 4, causing widespread disruption to air traffic services. An official report released Tuesday attributed the blackout to “digital noise” caused by desynchronization among multiple devices and interfaces at the KEPATHM facilities. The malfunction led to the unintended activation and continuous transmission of critical transmitters, disrupting key air navigation telecommunications.

Authorities said full operations were restored after systems were resynchronized, equipment rebooted, and traffic rerouted through the backbone network.

The failure forced a temporary suspension of all flights entering and leaving Greece, affecting Athens International Airport, Thessaloniki Airport, and several regional airports. Thousands of passengers were stranded, and multiple inbound flights were diverted.

The resignation has raised concerns over aviation safety and infrastructure reliability, prompting further reviews aimed at preventing similar incidents and strengthening safeguards across Greece's air navigation system.

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