USE OF UNICOM

1. Definition

UNICOM (Universal Communications) is a text feature that allows two way text communications between pilots. The aim is to report their positions and intentions should there be no active and relevant ATC available.

UNICOM is a tool for air to air self-information to be used by IVAO pilots when there is no controller active in their vicinity.

The use of UNICOM allows all pilots to be informed of the presence of nearby aircraft movement and to know the intentions of each of them, whether on the ground or in flight.

In IVAO, UNICOM has one dedicated frequency for use in text mode: 122.800MHz

2. Interest and explanation of Unicom

In the real world, Air Traffic Services are very often present. We have:

- En-route air traffic controllers that control the FIR and UIR airspace 24h per day and are available every day of the year.
- Major airports are mostly permanently staffed with at least one Air Traffic Control position. Usually available 24h per day or otherwise between 6h to 24h or when there is traffic. Traffic is not permitted outside of the operating hours. However, it is possible to specifically request a controller at an airport and to file a flight plan to that specific airport.
- Smaller airports are open with an active air traffic control service during slots of commercial traffic (7h-12h 14h-21h) and on days when commercial traffic is present. Outside of these time slots, the service is limited to self-flight information for pilots on a published radio frequency.
- Very small VFR airfields sometimes have only flight information services that are open only during day time or on weekends. Outside of these time periods, pilots rely on air-to-air self-information procedures.

On IVAO, active control is often not present. This is one of the main differences between the real and virtual world.

As in the real world, on the IVAO network and in the absence of air traffic control, all pilots must ensure self-information in flight and on the ground.
This is a mandatory procedure (it is not optional).

All pilots do not know all the frequencies at each airfield in the world, and in IVAO, the solution was to choose a **unique self-communicating information** service through the universal communication feature commonly known as UNICOM on a defined frequency 122.800MHz and accordingly set via IvAp.

3. Characteristics of UNICOM

What you should know about Unicom:

- **IvAp** is equipped with a filter that removes communication channels which are too far from your flying area.
- Only aircraft located in your area will receive your text transmissions in IvAp
- Only aircraft transmissions in your area will be displayed on your IvAp

The UNICOM frequency is 122.800MHz and is used throughout the IVAO world.

UNICOM is used by pilots in command of an aircraft to:

- send information to other pilots to notify them of his intentions of flying or moving on the ground
- to receive any information from other pilots and to be informed of their intentions and their movements
- coordinate with other pilots for a landing or take-off procedure, for altitude separation, for negotiating on integration in the traffic pattern, or for a visual separation

In summary, the use of UNICOM allows all pilots to be informed of the presence of nearby aircraft movement and to know the intentions of each of them, whether on the ground or in flight.

This is called Situational Awareness: know where you are, who is around you and what is happening.

To do this, you must submit your intentions on UNICOM <u>in advance</u> so that everyone <u>can correctly anticipate</u> the actions of others.

4. Text only and NO VOICE

All UNICOM transmission must use only text mode (via IvAp) and the transmission shall be made in aviation English. No voice can be used.

The English to be used is the basic words from standard phraseology.
The use of codes and text shortcuts are permitted.

There are six ICAO languages used in aviation (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Russian). Sometimes the local country ICAO language is used instead of English. Please pay attention that the use of another language other than English does not allow self-information as effectively with foreign pilots!

Why UNICOM voice cannot be used:

- Having several hundreds of pilots voices on the same frequency would not be feasible
- The voice servers cannot filter channels according to distance
- There are not enough voice servers to accommodate everyone on UNICOM (saturation)
- Those who do not speak English would be penalized.