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COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) 2025/21

of 19 December 2024

amending Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 as regards requirements for aerodrome operators related to ground handling activities

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2018 on common rules in the field of civil aviation and establishing a European Union Aviation Safety Agency, and amending Regulations (EC) No 2111/2005, (EC) No 1008/2008, (EU) No 996/2010, (EU) No 376/2014 and Directives 2014/30/EU and 2014/53/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Regulations (EC) No 552/2004 and (EC) No 216/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EEC) No 3922/91 ([1]), and in particular Article 39(1), point (a) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 establishes essential requirements for the safe provision of ground handling services and organisations providing them at the Union aerodromes within the scope of that Regulation.

(2) Commission Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 ([2]) lays down requirements and administrative procedures related to aerodromes, including on certain operations and facilities that are directly related to ground handling services and organisations providing them.

(3) All organisations under Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 are responsible for managing safety risks and aiming for continuous improvement of safety including mutual sharing of safety-relevant information. The purpose of this Regulation is to ensure a common approach when addressing the safety risks of the interfaces in ground handling operations, beyond the occurrence-reporting obligations. This approach would complete the occurrence-reporting obligations to competent authorities and would ensure a more direct flow of safety information among the stakeholders concerned. Therefore, the aerodrome requirements should be amended to enable aerodrome operators to share relevant safety information resulting from occurrence reports or oversight inspections and audits with other organisations to support them in maintaining safety of their own operations.

(4) To ensure a level playing field for all organisations providing ground handling services at the Union aerodromes within the scope of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 and a baseline level of safety of the ground handling activities, aerodrome operators should also comply with the ground handling requirements when they provide ground handling services. However, as aerodrome operators already have a management system in place, the ground handling requirements should be easy to integrate to create minimum disruptions to the established system of the aerodrome operator. Therefore, the new requirements on ground handling activities should only cover the differences and the missing elements of the aerodrome operator's management system, thus avoiding contradictions or duplications of the existing requirements.

(5) Dangerous goods in cargo or mail may be a significant hazard to health, safety, environment or property when not stored correctly. When they are stored at aerodrome storage facilities, the storage conditions should be adequate to prevent any damage to those packages. Therefore, the aerodrome requirements should be amended to ensure that minimum safety conditions for the storage facilities are complied with.

([1]) OJ L 212, 22.8.2018, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1139/oj.

([2]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 of 12 February 2014 laying down requirements and administrative procedures related to aerodromes pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 44, 14.2.2014, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/139/oj).

(6) When unit load devices are used for the carriage of baggage and cargo, they have to be stored in good condition when not in use. Therefore, it is important that when the aerodrome operator makes available facilities for the storage of unit load devices, those facilities are adequate and prevent their damage, deterioration, or storage on the ground. The aerodrome requirements should be amended to clarify this.

(7) To avoid any unnecessary duplication of documentation, aerodrome operators providing ground handling services themselves may either include the ground handling elements into their existing aerodrome manual if they consider this is more effective than creating an additional ground handling manual or add them in a separate manual. In either case, the ground handling manual and any subsequent amendments and revisions to it should not require an approval by the competent authority. The relevant requirement in Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 should be amended accordingly to reflect this.

(8) If aerodrome operators or providers of apron management services provide also ground handling services, they have to develop and implement a management system compliant with the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/20 ([3]). To avoid duplication of the same elements of their management system for compliance with all regulations applicable to them, these organisations should be allowed to have an integrated management system for efficiency purposes. The aerodrome requirements and the apron management service requirements should therefore be amended to enable the possibility for those organisations to establish and apply an integrated management system.

(9) The ground handling domain represents an interface in itself, with services being provided *to* an aircraft *at* an aerodrome. This makes it difficult at times to make a clear distinction between the responsibilities of the different stakeholders involved in the same activities, or they may overlap in certain steps. One of such activities is related to the control of pedestrians on the movement area and around the aircraft. While the aerodrome operator is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place for the safety of pedestrians on the movement area, without necessarily being also the one that implements those procedures, the organisation that implements those procedures is usually the ground handling organisation that performs more activities on the apron and around the aircraft during passenger boarding and disembarkation. The aerodrome operator would have in such case rather a coordination and monitoring role. To clearly distinguish between the different roles of the aerodrome operator and the ground handling organisation when it is different from the aerodrome operator, and considering the current way in which such procedures are actually implemented, the wording of the relevant requirement should be adjusted to bring more clarity in terms of the responsibilities of each party involved.

(10) Aircraft refuelling is an activity involving several stakeholders – aerodrome operator, aircraft operator and ground handling service provider – with different responsibilities in the process, all aiming at ensuring safety of the operation, the aircraft and the aerodrome. For a better identification of the responsibility of the aerodrome operator in ensuring aerodrome safety and good apron management during aircraft refuelling, the requirement addressing aircraft refuelling should be slightly adjusted. This should also prevent the unintended interpretation that the aerodrome operator might be responsible for the procedure related to aircraft refuelling which belongs to the aircraft operator as an activity related to the servicing of its aircraft.

(11) Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 should therefore be amended.

(12) It is necessary to provide sufficient time for the ground handling industry and competent authorities to implement the new regulatory framework after the entry into force of this Regulation, therefore a transition period of 3 years should be provided in the Regulation.

(13) The requirements laid down in this Regulation are based on Opinion No 01/2024 ([4]) issued by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency in accordance with Article 75(2), points (b) and (c), and Article 76(1) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139.

([3]) Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/20 of 19 December 2024 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council by laying down requirements for the safe provision of ground handling services and for organisations providing them (OJ L, 2025/20, 7.3.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2025/20/oj).

([4]) https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/document-library/opinions/opinion-no-012024.

(14) In accordance with Article 128(4) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139, the Commission consulted experts designated by each Member State in accordance with the principles laid down in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law-Making ([5]),

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Annexes III and IV to Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 are amended in accordance with the Annex to this Regulation.

Article 2

Entry into force and application

1. This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

2. It shall apply from 27 March 2028.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 19 December 2024.

For the Commission
The President
Ursula VON DER LEYEN

([5]) OJ L 123, 12.5.2016, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/2016/512/oj.

ANNEX

Annexes to Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 are amended as follows:

(1) Annex III is amended as follows:

(a) in point ADR.OR.C.020, the following point (d) is added:

'(d) inform the ground handling organisations at the aerodrome of the action taken to address the non-compliance when the non-compliance directly affects the safety risk within, or the responsibilities of, those ground handling organisations.';

(b) in point ADR.OR.D.005, the following point (f) is added:

'(f) If the aerodrome operator is part of a legal entity that holds one or more additional organisation certificates, approvals or authorisations, or declares its activities in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1139, the aerodrome operator may integrate its management system to the management system required under Regulation (EU) No 139/2014.';

(c) point ADR.OR.D.020 is amended as follows:

(i) point (b) is replaced by the following:

'(b) The aerodrome operator shall designate appropriate areas at the aerodrome to be used for the storage of dangerous goods transported through the aerodrome. The storage conditions for dangerous goods shall ensure both the following:

(1) segregation of dangerous goods can be secured as per the international standards and recommended practices;

(2) the facility provides adequate conditions to prevent any damage to the dangerous goods items.';

(ii) the following point (c) is added:

'(c) When the aerodrome operator also designates appropriate areas at the aerodrome to be used for the storage of unit load devices, it shall ensure that these areas are adequate to prevent their damage, deterioration or storage on the ground and to ensure protection against adverse weather.';

(d) in point ADR.OR.E.005, point (f) is replaced by the following:

'(f) Notwithstanding point (e), when amendments or revisions are required in the interest of safety, they may be published and applied immediately, provided that any approval required has been applied for. Amendments and revisions concerning the ground handling activities subject to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/20 (*) are not required to be submitted to the competent authority for approval.

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(*) Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/20 of 19 December 2024 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 of the European Parliament and of the Council by laying down requirements for the safe provision of ground handling services and for organisations providing them (OJ L, 2025/20, 7.3.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2025/20/oj)';

(e) in point ADR.OR.F.045, the following point (d) is added:

'(d) Notwithstanding points (a) to (c), if the provider of AMS is part of a legal entity that declares its responsibility for the provision of ground handling services in accordance with Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/20, the provider of AMS may integrate its management system with the management system required under that Regulation.';

(2) Annex IV is amended as follows:

(a) point ADR.OPS.B.033 is amended as follows:

(i) point (a)(3) is replaced by the following:

'(3) control the movement of persons on the apron.';

(ii) the following point (a1) is inserted:

'(a1) The aerodrome operator shall establish procedures to ensure that passengers embarking or disembarking an aircraft or who need to walk to, from or across the apron:

(1) are escorted by trained and competent personnel;

(2) do not interfere with stationary aircraft and ground servicing activities;

(3) are protected from operating aircraft, including the effects of their engines, as well as vehicular or other activities.';

(b) in point ADR.OPS.D.001, point (a)(4) is replaced by the following:

'(4) cover the following:

(i) aircraft stand allocation;

(ii) provision of marshalling services;

(iii) aircraft parking and departure from the stand;

(iv) jet blast precautions and engine tests;

(v) start up clearances and taxi instructions.';

(c) point ADR.OPS.D.060 is replaced by the following:

'**ADR.OPS.D.060 Apron safety during aircraft refuelling**

(a) The aerodrome operator shall establish a procedure to ensure safety of operations on the apron during aircraft refuelling.

(b) The procedure shall require the following:

(1) the prohibition of open flames and the use of electrical or similar tools by the personnel in the immediate vicinity of the refuelling point likely to produce sparks or arcs within the refuelling zone;

(2) the prohibition to start ground power units during refuelling;

(3) for fuel trucks: the existence of an unobstructed path from the aircraft to allow the quick removal of fuel bowsers and persons in case of emergency;

(4) the correct bonding of aircraft and fuel supply sources and the correct application of earthing procedures;

(5) the immediate notification of the into-plane fuelling service provider in case of fuel spillage and detailed instructions on how to handle fuel spillages;

(6) the positioning of ground support equipment in such a way that emergency exits are free of any obstruction to allow the expeditious evacuation of the passengers, if passengers are embarking or disembarking or remain in the aircraft during refuelling;

(7) the ready availability of fire extinguishers of a suitable type for at least initial intervention in the event of a fuel fire;

(8) ensuring unobstructed way out for the fuelling vehicle and unobstructed access to the fuel hydrant and the emergency stop;

(9) the discontinuation of refuelling operations if electrical thunderstorms are at or in the vicinity of the aerodrome.'.