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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

P7_TA(2013)0290

External aviation policy

European Parliament resolution of 2 July 2013 on the EU's External Aviation Policy — Addressing future challenges (2012/2299(INI))

(2016/C 075/01)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled 'The EU's External Aviation Policy — Addressing Future Challenges' (COM(2012)0556),
 - having regard to its resolution of 7 June 2011 on international air agreements under the Treaty of Lisbon⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its decision of 20 October 2010 on the revision of the framework agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission ('the Framework Agreement')⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on the EU-US air agreement⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 April 2007 on establishing a European common aviation area⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2006 on developing the agenda for the Community's external aviation policy⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and in particular Articles 90, 100(2) and 218,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the opinions of the Committee on International Trade and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A7-0172/2013),
- A. whereas aviation is a rapidly growing area of the economy, both within the Union and outside, especially in Asia and the Middle East,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 380 E, 11.12.2012, p. 5.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 70 E, 8.3.2012, p. 98.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 236 E, 12.8.2011, p. 121.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 74 E, 20.3.2008, p. 506.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 287 E, 24.11.2006, p. 84.

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- B. whereas aviation has an important role to play in connecting people and business, both inside the Union and globally, especially with developing markets,
- C. whereas the number of job cuts implemented and scheduled by European airlines since 2012 amounts to more than 20 000,
- D. whereas the European social partners in aviation, agreed that coordinated and comprehensive action is necessary at international level in the context of a dialogue on the impact of the global crisis in civil aviation held on 29 January 2013,
- E. whereas the Commission's 2005 Communication played an important role in developing the Union's External Aviation Policy,
- F. whereas developments over the past seven years make a further review appropriate,

General

1. Emphasises the progress made in creating a single and open Union regional market and, at the same time, in building a common Union approach to its External Aviation Policy;
2. Welcomes the Commission Communication, which provides a timely analysis of the current situation and the progress achieved in external aviation policy since 2005, as well as of the challenges facing the Union's aviation sector in an extremely competitive global aviation market;
3. Underlines the vital role of the aviation sector to the Union's economy, especially in terms of growth and jobs, since this industry supports over 5 million European jobs and accounts for 2,4 % of the Union's GDP, contributing as well to the Union's connectivity with the rest of the world; stresses the need to maintain a strong and competitive Union aviation sector;
4. Considers that there has been important progress in defining and implementing Union mechanisms and systems, such as the Single European Sky (SES), the SES Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR), the clean sky initiative, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), to enhance safety and meet passenger requirements; considers that further progress must be made in these areas;
5. Is concerned, nevertheless, about delays in implementing the SES and SESAR, given the unnecessary costs these delays impose on airlines and their customers; supports the Commission in taking punitive action against those Member States who have not complied with the December 2012 deadline and who have failed to make any progress regarding the Functional Airspace Blocks;
6. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to press ahead with the implementation of the SES and SESAR; notes that the development of the SES, when fully implemented, will create significant direct and indirect employment opportunities;
7. Stresses that these Union programmes are important not only for the internal market but also for external policy; believes that the completion and implementation of these instruments will help to consolidate the position of the Union's industry in the competitive global market;
8. Emphasises the importance of the current revision of the Air Passenger Rights Regulation and supports strong and profoundly consumer-friendly European legislation;
9. Is aware that the impact of the financial crisis varies between regions of the world; considers that this has led to Union airlines facing competitive challenges and that bilateral air service agreements are not always the most appropriate solution to combat market restrictions or unfair subsidies;
10. Considers that, as a comprehensive External Aviation Policy has not been achieved despite effort over the past seven years, a more coordinated Union approach, involving greater ambition, should be applied as soon as possible to establish fair and open competition;

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11. Takes the view that European regulatory convergence is a key element for a strong European position on the global market and for interactions with third countries;

2005 Communication and Parliament's resolution

12. Welcomes the progress made concerning the three pillars of the 2005 policy; the principle of the Union designation is now recognised in more than 100 third countries; almost 1 000 bilateral air services agreements have been brought into conformity with Union law, thereby ensuring legal certainty; regrets that important partners, including China, India and South Africa, have yet to accept these principles;

13. Points out that the implementation of the Union's External Aviation Policy has helped to maximise the potential of the single market insofar as it facilitates the consolidation of the Union's aviation industry at a time when globalisation calls for stronger economic actors to resist foreign competition;

14. Underlines that a growing Common Aviation Area has been developed with neighbouring countries; considers that these agreements have created important economic benefits; welcomes the substantial efforts that have been undertaken to align different regulatory frameworks with Union legislation in areas such as safety, security, air traffic management, the environment, passenger rights, economic regulation and social aspects;

15. Welcomes the comprehensive EU-US Air Transport Agreement, and the positive impact it has had on both economies, as well as the estimated 80 000 new jobs which were created in the first five years;

16. Believes that a strong Union External Aviation Policy focusing on the most significant growth markets in the long-haul sector would open up new economic opportunities for Union airlines, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region;

17. Stresses that negotiations with some key partners, including Brazil, are still to be concluded, and that wide-ranging air service agreements with such countries could produce substantial economic benefits;

18. Emphasises that some of the requests in Parliament's 2006 resolution are still to be met; stresses, in particular, the need to promote appropriate international safety and security standards, to ensure the equal treatment of Union and non-Union air carriers and to mitigate negative effects on the environment;

19. Emphasises the importance of tools such as the Joint Committee system for creating common approaches to aviation-specific issues;

20. Welcome the achievement of other points raised in the 2006 resolution, such as the extension of EASA's responsibilities;

Market

21. Notes an important increase in traffic to, from and within the Asia-Pacific region, reflecting its trend economic growth; is worried about the possibility that, if nothing is done, Union airlines and businesses may both miss out on great opportunities from this part of the world and lose the capacity to generate profits;

22. Notes also that the global position of non-Union carriers has been reinforced through subsidies and through major public investments in aircraft and infrastructure undertaken in various parts of the Middle East, the Far East and South America;

23. Stresses the significant changes in the Union's internal market as a result of the increased share of low-cost carriers; believes that, competition notwithstanding, the two business models could find ways to complement each other when facing external market challenges;

24. Notes that extremely low ticket prices offered by some European low-cost carriers are compensated by the companies via unfair practices regarding working conditions, such as poor social and labour law standards for staff; notes also that minimal investments in safety standards and unjustified regional subsidies seem to play a role in this ticket pricing;

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25. Points out that there is a great deal of competition between carriers as a result of low-cost airlines, which make up 40 % of the Union aviation market; stresses that, where a Member State has ratified ILO Conventions 87 and 98, airline companies must comply with their fundamental rights provisions regarding freedom of assembly, as well as the recognition of employee regional representatives and wage agreements, in which connection compliance must be monitored and infringements penalised;
26. Emphasises the importance of airport hubs, including the development of secondary hubs, specialised hubs and multi-hubbing, as well as the urgent need for both public and private long-term investments in airport infrastructure to increase capacity, for example by building new runways, as well as for more efficient use of existing infrastructure — including regional airports, for example in the Mediterranean and at the Union's eastern borders — through better allocation of airport slots;
27. Underlines that the competitiveness of Union carriers is hampered at global level by factors such as the lack of a level playing field owing to, for example, different national taxes, congested airports, high ATM and airport charges, State aid received by competitors, the cost of carbon emissions, the application of lower social standards and different rules on State aid outside the Union;
28. Considers that these factors represent potential obstacles to growth and employment.
29. Calls on the Commission to conduct a study on the Members States' disparate air travel fees, duties, levies and taxes and the impact of these on ticket prices and airlines' profits, as well as a study on possible State aid received by competitors at global level and its impact on the Union's airlines;
30. Welcomes the new Union rules regarding social security for mobile workers;

Future actions

31. Takes the view that the External Aviation Policy should fully respect the principle of reciprocity, including market access, openness and fair competition, with a level playing field, and should have two main objectives: to benefit consumers and businesses, and to support Union airlines and airports in their efforts to preserve their position as world leaders;
32. Stresses, therefore, that air transport agreements with neighbouring countries and like-minded partners must contain a regulatory framework for fair competition;
33. Calls for the continued use of procedures to negotiate comprehensive aviation agreements at the Union level, based on European unity and authorised by the Council;
34. Calls on the Commission to promote and defend Union interests within the agreements and to put forward and share Union standards, values and best practices;
35. Calls for increased cooperation and coordination between the Commission and the Member States, when negotiating air services agreements with key partners, in order to increase the Union's leverage and its chances of accessing new markets;
36. Calls on the Commission to include the regulatory conditions for safety, security, passenger rights, staff training and certification in comprehensive agreements;
37. Calls on the Commission to complete ongoing negotiations with neighbourhood countries such as Ukraine, Lebanon, Tunisia, Azerbaijan and Algeria; points out that the proximity of these countries and their markets, and the economic growth that has occurred in some of them in recent times, may be seen as a growth opportunity for regional and secondary airports in the Union; takes the view that, given the large amount of capacity at regional airports, such airports can play a part in reducing congestion at the main European hubs, thus making them more competitive at global level;
38. Calls on the Council to grant the Commission, on a case-by-case basis, mandates for negotiation with other neighbourhood countries such as Turkey, Armenia and Libya;

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39. Considers that the Union should take a case-by-case approach to its relations with key partners, and calls on the Commission to complete, as soon as possible, the negotiations of comprehensive air agreements, including with Australia and Brazil, and on the Council to grant the Commission a mandate to negotiate such agreements with fast-growing economies such as China, India and ASEAN and Gulf countries;

40. Takes the view that a possible future Trade and Investment Agreement between the Union and the US would also affect the aviation sector; considers, therefore, that the Commission should provide sufficient information so that the upcoming negotiations can be closely monitored by Parliament;

41. Underlines the need fully to achieve the objectives set out in air transport agreements with key partners, in particular the US and Canada, including the removal of restrictions on foreign ownership and control of airlines; calls for action to overcome the ongoing imbalance between Union airlines' ability to undertake cabotage in the US market and US airlines' ability to do so in Europe; points out that international cross-investment helps boost the economic vitality of the aviation sector, and urges the Commission to foster an international legal environment that is conducive to expansion in, and support for, such investment, and that serves to promote an active policy aimed at establishing standards and best practices for international investment;

42. Takes the view that bilateral agreements can make an important contribution to the development of an External Aviation Policy, but emphasises, at the same time, the importance of a common Union approach;

43. Stresses the importance of fair and open competition in all activities connected with air services; calls for the inclusion of standard 'fair competition' clauses in bilateral air services agreements;

44. Calls on the Commission to define, and on the Member States to apply, a minimum set of standard Union legal requirements, notably with regard to regulatory cooperation, labour and environmental standards and passenger rights, to be included in bilateral agreements, with a clear aim of creating opportunities and removing barriers for Union airlines;

45. Calls on the Commission to propose an urgent revision or replacement of Regulation (EC) No 868/2004 concerning protection against subsidisation and unfair pricing practices causing injury to Community air carriers⁽¹⁾;

46. Supports the Commission's proposals for safeguarding free and fair competition in relations and agreements with third countries and for developing more effective new trade defence instruments that are better suited to dealing with unfair practices such as discrimination, inconsistent application of the regulatory framework, and lack of transparency in financial reporting by companies, which can lead to market distortions;

47. Calls on the Commission to engage in a dialogue with Gulf countries with a view to enhancing transparency and safeguarding fair competition;

48. Notes that the Russian Federation refuses to respect the agreement on the phasing-out of Siberian overflight royalties reached in the framework of the Russian Federation's WTO accession in 2011; considers that, as the Union carriers are placed under long-term discriminatory conditions by these illegal transit charges, the Union should be able to take reciprocal measures — by denying or limiting transit over its territory or, more generally, by taking any measure related to the use of Union airspace for air carriers of the Russian Federation — in order to motivate the Russian Federation to remove the above-mentioned charges, which are illegal as they contravene international agreements (the Chicago Convention); calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Council to examine possible measures to ensure reciprocity in relation to the use of air space between the Russian Federation and the Union;

49. Stresses that an ambitious Union policy on protecting air passengers' rights can give Union airlines a quality advantage in global competition; calls on the Commission to take further steps to promote the high Union standards in the field of air passengers' rights and to monitor their transposition and application;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 162, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

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50. Calls on the Commission to elaborate, as soon as possible, a new regulatory framework regarding implementation of SES, based on a top-down approach, including a better cooperation mechanism between European air navigation service providers, and to provide the necessary conditions to start SESAR deployment;

51. Calls on the Council finally to adopt a position on Parliament's position of 5 May 2010 on the proposal for a directive on aviation security charges ⁽¹⁾, which though adopted in Parliament by an overwhelming majority of 96 % is still blocked by the Council;

52. Considers that the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has an important role to play in developing regulatory frameworks for the global aviation sector, for example in the liberalisation of ownership and control of airlines and in ensuring global interoperability in air traffic management; encourages the ICAO to continue to develop global, market-based measures to reduce noise at airports and to limit all relevant greenhouse gas emissions; considers it to be essential that an agreement on a global approach is reached within the ICAO as soon as possible;

53. Calls for negotiating mandates to be given to the Commission to clarify and strengthen the Union's representation within the ICAO;

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54. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

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Member States' export credit agencies

European Parliament resolution of 2 July 2013 on the first annual report from the Commission to the European Parliament on the activities of Member States' Export Credit Agencies (2012/2320(INI))

(2016/C 075/02)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1233/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 on the application of certain guidelines in the field of officially supported export credits and repealing Council Decisions 2001/76/EC and 2001/77/EC ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Commission delegated Regulation of 14 March 2013 amending Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1233/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of certain guidelines in the field of officially supported export credits (C(2013)1378),
- having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2012 on financing EU SMEs' trade and investment: facilitated access to credit in support of internationalisation ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 September 2011 on a new trade policy for Europe under the Europe 2020 Strategy ⁽³⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 81 E, 15.3.2011, p. 164.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 326, 8.12.2011, p. 45.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0469.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 56 E, 26.2.2013, p. 87.