

Opinion on the proposal for a Council Directive on the limitation of the operation of Chapter 2 aeroplanes⁽¹⁾

(91/C 339/16)

On 30 April 1991 the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 84(2) of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, on the abovementioned proposal.

The Section for Protection of the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs, which was responsible for preparing the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its Opinion on 9 July 1991. The Rapporteur was Mr Velasco.

At its 289th plenary session (meeting of 25 September 1991), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following Opinion unanimously.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Committee approves the proposed Directive which, unlike previous proposals, is the result of a consensus arrived at with the official civil aviation organizations.

1.2. The aim of the proposal is to phase out Chapter 2 aircraft, which are regarded as unacceptably noisy, over a number of years. It was drawn up jointly by the Commission and the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) as part of the search for an 'international' solution to the problem of aircraft noise.

1.3. The Committee welcomes the fact that the proposal accords with its Opinion of 13 July 1989 on the same subject⁽²⁾. In this Opinion the Committee stressed the need for the Commission and ECAC to resolve their differences, for a Commission environmental expert to attend ECAC meetings and for the measures to be introduced gradually.

1.4. As all these points have been met, the Committee approves the proposal.

2. General comments

2.1. The proposed Directive will make a major contribution to reducing aircraft noise levels in the vicinity of airports.

2.2. The Directive is consistent with the proposals of other major international organizations, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and ECAC.

2.3. The Directive calls for substantial investments by the European airlines at a time of economic weakness (almost all lost money in 1990), as it will accelerate the withdrawal or expensive modification of aircraft in service.

2.4. This Directive will not achieve its intended benefits unless the authorities in the Member States take measures to ensure that the land around airports is not used for residential purposes.

2.5. The Committee regards the proposed period of 25 years for the useful life of an aircraft as reasonable. But while it may be argued that such a period is sufficient for the airlines to recoup their investments, it should not be taken as a limit on the technical life of an aircraft which is determined more by use and maintenance than age.

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 111, 26. 4. 1991, p. 5.

⁽²⁾ OJ No C 221, 28. 8. 1989.

Done at Brussels, 25 September 1991.

*The Chairman
of the Economic and Social Committee*

François STAEDLIN