



10 October 2011

European Commission must hold firm on airspace improvements

Later this month the European Commission is expected to finalise a report, criticising every member of the European Union for not going far enough in their airspace improvement plans.

European Member States agreed to further accelerate progress towards a Single European Sky (SES) following the 2010 volcanic ash crisis. SES is a project which will make Europe's fragmented airspace more efficient, cut flight delays and deliver huge environmental benefits. Member States were asked to submit detailed 2012-14 performance plans to the Commission by June this year. These plans covered two key areas: cost-efficiency and punctuality. However, those same States have failed to deliver on their promises and an independent review body has now rejected their efficiency plans for not being ambitious enough.

"The benefits of the Single European Sky depend on countries abandoning their go-it-alone approach in order to take full advantage of economies of scale, sharing of technologies and resources and coordinated investment to achieve substantially lower costs and higher operating efficiencies," said the heads of four members of the European Airspace User Associations (AEA, EBAA, ELFAA and ERA). "However, instead of working together, countries are limiting their ambitions to their own borders and undermining everything SES is seeking to achieve."

The Commission is now expected to instruct all 27 Member States to revise their plans, step up their cost-efficiency targets and increase their productivity.

"Five states - Austria, France, Germany, Spain and the UK – had their plans rejected in both areas. This lack of ambition is totally unacceptable," concluded the heads of Associations. "We urge the Commission to stick to its guns and put pressure on the Member States to establish realistic and achievable plans to ensure that the Commission's targets are delivered."

The following is for information:

States that failed to meet punctuality targets:

Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK.

States asked to improve punctuality targets:

Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Portugal.

States that failed to meet cost-efficiency targets:

Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

States asked to improve cost-efficiency targets:

Belgium, Denmark, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland.

For further information, please contact:

Association of European Airlines (AEA)

Victoria Moores

Phone: +32 (0)2 6398976

Email: victoria.moores@aea.be

European Business Aviation Association (EBAA)

Pedro Vicente Azua

Chief Operating Officer

Phone: +32 (0)2 766 0070

Email: pedrovazua@ebaa.org

European Low Fares Airline Association (ELFAA)

Press Office - Grayling

Phone: +32 (0)2 25049001

Email: press@elfaa.com

European Regions Airline Association (ERA)

Lesley Shepherd

Phone: +44 (0)1276 485578 or +44 (0)7713 984793

Email: lesley.shepherd@eraa.org