



Airspace users' statement on the EU Air Traffic Management (ATM) performance targets 2020-2024

05 April 2019 (Brussels) -- The weakest levels of ambition in the history of the Single European Sky (SES) Performance and Charging scheme were approved by EU member states this week. These performance targets will reward poorly performing Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) whilst frustrating those who are already delivering. They will not incentivise the performance improvements the European airspace network desperately needs, nor will they support the delivery of the Single European Sky benefits. Combined with outdated staffing practices which do not provide the required resource levels in peak periods – for example when European citizens and passengers go on holiday – it becomes evident that real reform of this sector is urgently needed.

The European Commission (EC) recently commissioned an academic study to benchmark the performance of air navigation service providers (ANSPs). The study conservatively estimated EU-wide cost-inefficiencies in the range of 25-30%, due to ANSPs' poor performance. The latest performance targets (the so-called "reference period 3, (RP3) targets") will do little to address these inefficiencies. In fact, they will make a situation which allowed ANSPs to generate €1.3bn in surplus (over the past 10 years) on top of their regulated profits, even worse.

The current underspending by ANSPs on planned capital investments and staffing – already paid for by airspace users and their passengers – should not continue to be rewarded. In 2018, this contributed to delays of more than 19 million minutes -- 105% more than in 2017. Appeasing key member states rather than challenging them on their lacklustre performance will further burden airspace users and passengers with rising costs, even more delays and unnecessary additional CO2 emissions.

In short, the agreed proposal waters down the current situation and exacerbates the potential for further delays when RP3 begins in 2020. Despite investment recouped from airspace users and their customers over the last decade – much-needed capacity has yet to be delivered.

Moving forward, every participant in the target setting process needs to ensure that national performance targets will challenge ANSPs to deliver consistent improvements or face financial penalties. Airspace users remain committed in their support towards the European Commission's DG MOVE, the Performance Review Board (PRB), States and ANSPs to identify and set ambitious targets which would enable aviation to deliver higher levels of efficiency and thus ensure that flying remains the safest and most economical way to travel for years to come.