

Aviation: MEPs discuss new rules to ensure safety and competitiveness

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Aviation is a key driver of economic growth and jobs, but in order to ensure safety and let European companies maintain their competitiveness, current EU rules need to be updated. The European Commission is working on proposals now, but MEPs will already debate and vote today on what they would like to see in the aviation package to be announced by the end of the year. Follow the debate and vote online and check out our infographic about the EU's largest airports.

Until the early 1990s, EU air transport was a highly regulated industry with limited scope for competition. However, the EU's liberalisation of the internal aviation market boosted the number of routes and frequencies and made air transport significantly cheaper.

Today the aviation sector employs 5.1 million people and contributes €365 billion or 2.4% to Europe's gross domestic product.

Why existing rules need to be updated

The aviation sector faces many risks, both economic such as fluctuations of the oil price, as well as those related to safety, including political crises and extreme weather. At the same time demand for air travel is growing. Global air transport is expected to grow by around 5% every year until 2030 and new competitors continue to enter the market. Other notable changes include increased congestion in the sky and on the ground.

Because of these challenges, the Commission is working on an aviation package to identify the main issues and the measures needed to tackle them. The proposal is due to be released by the end of this year. The proposal should include a revision of regulation on civil aviation as well as the mandate of the European Aviation Safety Agency and will potentially introduce rules on drones at EU-level.

Parliament's role

The Parliament has called several times for an update of existing rules to maintain Europe's excellent safety record in a changing and growing aviation market. MEPs are going to discuss this topic and vote on a related resolution on Wednesday 11 November during the plenary session in Brussels.

Find out more

- Watch live: debate after 17.00 CET, vote after 19.00: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/video?date=11-11-2015>
- Plenary agenda: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+AGENDA+20151111+SYN+DOC+XML+V0//EN>
- Briefing on the aviation package: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI%282015%29547554
- Briefing on civil drones in the EU: <http://epthinktank.eu/2015/10/29/civil-drones-in-the-european-union/>
- Public consultation on the aviation package : http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/consultations/2015-aviation-package_en.htm