



Resolution 512 (1972)¹

Repercussions of supersonic civil flights on human and natural environment

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the report of its Committee on Social and Health Questions on the repercussions of civil supersonic flights on human and natural environment ([Doc. 3071](#)) ;
2. Having regard to the report of its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development on the economic implications of the introduction of civil supersonic aircraft ([Doc. 3072](#)), and appreciating the economic and technical arguments advanced therein ;
3. Considering, however, that the advantages of civil supersonic air transport must be carefully weighed against its repercussions on human and natural environment ;
4. Considering that the effects of sonic booms, within wide "carpets" along the entire supersonic flight routes, cause serious annoyance and also damage to the populations exposed to it, and that, at the present state of knowledge, the possible effects on human organism, animal life and environment of cumulative exposure to sonic booms are unknown ;
5. Recalling its [Recommendation 538 \(1968\)](#) and [Resolution 383 \(1968\)](#) on aircraft noise abatement, and in particular paragraph 10 of this resolution stressing that the operation of civil supersonic aircraft should, without further delay, be subject to an international agreement banning supersonic flights over populated areas ;
6. Noting that several governments of Council of Europe member States have indicated the intention to prohibit supersonic flight over their territories ;
7. Noting that present knowledge does not permit drawing any firm conclusions with regard to repercussions which the emission of supersonic combustion products in the stratosphere may have on climate and human health, and emphasising that more extensive research should be carried out with a view to finding answers to these questions before civil supersonic aircraft are allowed to be used in regular flight operations ;
8. Emphasising the need for further experiments in order to know more precisely the effects of cosmic radiation on occupants of supersonic civil aircraft when flying at cruise altitude ;
9. Welcoming the current studies on biological effects of cosmic radiation in connection with supersonic flights carried out by the Working Group on Space Biophysics of its Committee on Science and Technology,
10. Attaches great importance to the application of international standards relating to aircraft noise, recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), and is of the opinion that ICAO's continuing work to reduce other adverse effects of civil aviation on environment should be supported as much as possible ;

1. Assembly debate on 22 January 1972 (19th Sitting) (see [Doc. 3071](#), report of the Committee on Social and Health Questions). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 January 1972 (23rd Sitting).



11. Emphasises that international agreement should be reached on regulations and measures designed to prevent detrimental effects of supersonic civil flights on human and natural environment ;
12. Urges that :
 - 12.1. the decision of operating civil supersonic aircraft should be taken by the competent authorities only in the light of the full results of scientific research into the effects which civil supersonic flights may have on human health, animal life and climate ;
 - 12.2. the possible risk of dangerous effects of such flights should be a reason not to permit large-scale operation of civil supersonic aircraft ;
 - 12.3. civil flights at supersonic speeds over populated areas should be banned ;
13. Requests the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to invite the Secretary General of the United Nations :
 - 13.1. to take, as soon as possible, the necessary steps to achieve international agreement on the lines of paragraph 12 above ; and
 - 13.2. to submit the proposals made in paragraph 12 to the 1972 United Nations Conference on Human Environment ;
14. Invites the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) to study the problem of cosmic radiation at flight altitudes of civil supersonic aircraft, with a view to drawing up international norms on maximum radiation doses to which occupants of civil supersonic aircraft can be exposed ;
15. Invites its Committee on Science and Technology to report in due course on the results of the research by its Working Group on Space Biophysics referred to in paragraph 9 above ;
16. Is of the opinion that the important question of the repercussions of military supersonic flights on environment also needs careful consideration and accordingly expresses the hope that governments of Council of Europe member States will undertake at world level parallel efforts to reduce as much as possible the adverse effects of such flights on environment.