



Resolution 1124 (1997)¹

European air transport policies - civil aviation in transition

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly welcomes the continuing enlargement of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), which now comprises thirty-five European countries. Such widening, which the Assembly hopes will soon include all of Europe, enables the ECAC to pursue its task of harmonising, and eventually integrating, civil aviation management across the continent. The Assembly, in its capacity as the conference's parliamentary forum, will continue to give the ECAC its full support in this process, working closely with other interested organisations.

2. Civil aviation in Europe is undergoing rapid and profound transformation. Some airlines have become more efficient and profitable, while others still operate at a loss and depend on public subsidies, which may prevent fair competition. Mergers and acquisitions, but above all alliances, occur more and more frequently. Deregulation within the European Union/European Economic Area is proceeding apace, with important consequences for civil aviation outside the region. Congestion in the air can be held at bay through technological improvements, but at and around airports it is becoming a major bottleneck.

3. The Assembly welcomes the considerable deregulation of air transport which has already taken place or is under way among the member states of the European Union and the European Economic Area, and which is greatly benefiting consumers. It expects such deregulation in future to be neither discriminatory nor create division with non-participating countries, whether European or non-European. The Assembly also recognises the extensive efforts at increased efficiency undertaken by several European airlines and welcomes the tendency toward greater co-operation among them, to the extent that it does not hamper healthy competition.

4. The Assembly invites the member states of the Council of Europe and of the ECAC:

4.1. to make full use of the ECAC in the quest to enable Europe's civil aviation industry to face intensified global competition, while keeping it consumer-oriented, economically healthy, environmentally sound and conducive to the continent's overall economic development and growing together. The ECAC should pay particular attention to the increasingly important areas of freight, charter and executive aviation;

4.2. to give the highest priority to the continued integration of the countries in central and eastern Europe into a "common European aviation area", and in particular to permit the ECAC to monitor closely air transport negotiations between the countries of the European Union and those of the European Economic Area on the one hand, and central and east European countries on the other, with the aim to achieve as liberal a pan-European civil aviation agreement as possible;

4.3. to involve the ECAC in similar fashion in negotiations with the United States and Canada, and with the countries of east and South-east Asia, for future multilateral, regulatory regimes with these two regions on condition of reciprocity – regimes that may follow the numerous "open skies" agreements already concluded between the United States and individual European countries;

1. Assembly debate on 25 April 1997 (16th Sitting) (see [Doc. 7778](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Mr Billing). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 April 1997 (16th Sitting).



- 4.4. to facilitate Europe's rapid adaptation to, and adoption of, new technological breakthroughs, in particular "ticket-less" passenger handling and satellite-guided navigation such as the planned European Global Navigation Overlay System (EGNOS);
 - 4.5. to speed up the air transport industry's adaptation to the expected doubling of passenger travel and air cargo by the year 2005, not least by enhancing airport capacity and ensuring better integration with other modes of transport and substitution, where possible, by high-speed trains; and by encouraging better links among smaller, regional airports as a supplement to the "hub-and-spoke" system with its often excessive reliance on big airports;
 - 4.6. to exploit the potential for development of infrastructure in Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia and other countries of central and eastern Europe so as to expand the capabilities of civil aviation in the region for delivering passengers and freight to the airlines of central Asia, the Middle East and South-east Asia;
 - 4.7. to proceed vigorously in ensuring a ban of aircraft or air carriers which do not meet agreed air-safety standards from the airspace of ECAC member countries.
5. Furthermore, the Assembly calls on the ECAC:
- 5.1. to pursue its goal of harmonising and integrating European air traffic control systems to enhance traffic capacity while safeguarding air safety;
 - 5.2. to take immediate steps, in close liaison with Eurocontrol, to implement the institutional strategy adopted by ECAC ministers at their meeting on 14 February 1997;
 - 5.3. to study the desired future contribution of Europe's sizeable charter industry to overall civil aviation, especially against the background of current deregulation;
 - 5.4. to work in favour of the break-up of monopolies in ground handling at certain airports, in view of the fact that excessive prices charged hurt consumer interests and distort competition;
 - 5.5. to study ways of ensuring environmentally friendly and rapid transport to airports, especially those permitting check-in on direct trains, thus enhancing airport efficiency;
 - 5.6. to pursue its efforts to reduce pollution and noise, in close co-operation with the European Union and building on the considerable work done in this area by other organisations, including the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), airline associations and aircraft manufacturers. In particular, the ECAC should build on its comprehensive Environmental Policy Statement and work in favour of a world-wide move towards less polluting and less noisy aircraft;
 - 5.7. to increase its work in the field of aviation security in order to ensure 100% baggage screening;
 - 5.8. to recognise that airports exist to serve passengers and that care is always needed to provide for easy processing and to avoid delays and queues as well as to appreciate that passengers do not necessarily benefit when airports are enlarged;
 - 5.9. to consider the possibility of establishing European awards to be granted to the most passenger-friendly international and regional airports in Europe;
 - 5.10. in co-operation with the ICAO and the European Union to intensify its work in the field of aviation safety, particularly as regards safety oversight;
 - 5.11. to build on the foundations established by its associate body, the Joint Aviation Authorities, in creating an appropriate institutional structure for a European safety authority.
6. The Assembly calls on France to further develop access by airlines, domestic or foreign, to Strasbourg, thereby allowing that city to realise its full potential as a "European capital".
7. Finally, the Assembly calls on the governments of those European countries which have not yet done so to join the ECAC and Eurocontrol.