



Resolution 1217 (2000)¹

European air transport policies – the need for a truly “One Sky Europe”

Parliamentary Assembly

1. At a time of rapidly growing demand for air transport, Europe's scattered air traffic management framework is in urgent need of a fundamental overhaul and full, continent-wide integration. The current critical situation of long, and worsening, air traffic delays causes massive economic losses to all market participants. It is due mainly to insufficient co-ordination between air traffic control centres and insufficient route and airspace structures across national borders. This situation can no longer be accepted, at a time when passengers should be at the centre of air transport concerns; when Europe's future growing together critically depends on efficient, but safe, air transport; and when the technology in the form of satellite navigation and computer capacity is readily available to make “one sky Europe” a reality.

2. The Assembly recognises the valiant efforts of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) and Eurocontrol to prevent delays from worsening even further within the parameters of the present framework. In particular, it sees the new, revised Eurocontrol Convention as a major step forward in the direction of an integrated air traffic management (ATM) system. It calls for the convention's rapid ratification by all member states, with a view to its early entry into force. The Assembly also calls for the European Union's speedy membership of Eurocontrol, not least in consideration of the EU's active role on behalf of ATM integration.

3. However, the ECAC and Eurocontrol member states, which over the past decade have liberalised the airline industry, must now do the same with ATM in looking beyond national prerogatives toward a Europe in urgent need of a continent-wide, seamless and fully integrated ATM system design. Action is particularly urgent in the bottleneck region of Switzerland, Italy, Spain and France, where most delays originate and quickly spread and amplify across the continent.

4. A better functioning ATM system will also require the separation between ATM service providers, who, whether private or public, should be independent of governments, and a European ATM regulatory authority, preferably Eurocontrol. The latter should remain responsible for safety, optimal air space use, economic efficiency and interoperability between system components.

5. The Assembly welcomes the ECAC's and Eurocontrol's widening membership in central and eastern Europe, whose full participation in “one sky Europe” is vital to the continent's future, including successful European Union enlargement. To the extent that a “one sky Europe” can be put into place rapidly, the ECAC and Eurocontrol must receive funds commensurate with increased tasks.

6. Beyond the urgent need for a “one sky Europe”, the future of Europe's air transport industry will also increasingly depend on increased airport capacity – including better road/rail access and check-in facilities – and, where appropriate, continued healthy competition in the air transport industry. There remains an urgent need for an integrated strategic approach towards a European transport system, in which railroads in particular could become a viable alternative to mid-distance air travel.

7. Finally, the Assembly calls on the ECAC to establish, in co-operation with the European Union, a charter of air passenger rights applicable in all ECAC member countries, especially as regards compensation for undue delays and flight cancellations that are the fault of airlines, overbooking, and in the application of the

1. Assembly debate on 27 June 2000 (18th Sitting) (see [Doc. 8759](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, rapporteur: Mr Billing). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 June 2000 (18th Sitting).



Resolution 1217 (2000)

rights of passengers with reduced mobility or children. The Assembly in this context welcomes the ECAC's work toward an agreement on the treatment of such persons and hopes it can be brought to a speedy conclusion.