

Air transport: aviation security charges

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The Council took note of a progress report on this proposal for a directive establishing common principles for the levying of security charges at EU airports. The common framework proposed is designed to guarantee non-discrimination and transparency, to give adequate scope for consultation regarding the level of the security charges and to ensure that they are directly related to the cost of providing aviation security. Furthermore, an independent supervisory authority should be established in each Member State to ensure correct application of the directive.

The state of play on this proposal has not changed much since the last progress report presented to the Council at its December meeting. The Council therefore agreed to await the European Parliament's position at first reading, which is likely to be adopted in April 2010, and invited its preparatory bodies to resume examination once the European Parliament has voted on the proposal.

The **key issue where positions differ is still the scope of the proposed legislation**. Under the original Commission proposal, the directive would apply to all EU airports. Several Member States, however, favour limiting the scope to airports whose annual passenger traffic exceeds a certain threshold. Whilst a threshold of five million passenger movements would be acceptable for a majority of delegations, a number of Member States would prefer to include all commercial airports or to lower the threshold. As a compromise, the Spanish presidency suggested a threshold of two million passenger movements, but that proposal was opposed by a majority of Member States, which fear that lowering the threshold might entail a major administrative burden.

The provisions on impact assessment and cost-relatedness as well as a possible exemption from the obligation to have an independent supervisory authority are also issues still under discussion.