Implementation of the Single European Sky legislation

2012/2005(INI) - 23/10/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Implementation of the Single European Sky Legislation.

Timeframe: Parliament notes that 2012 is expected to be a pivotal year for the implementation of the SES. The critical phase of deployment is on the horizon and must be tackled in a timely, synchronised and coordinated manner. Members consider that it is necessary to build significantly on the progress made so far, **laying down binding timeframes for the implementation of the SES** but also taking account of business considerations. They underline the need to push ahead with the implementation of the SES legislation, as well as with the performance scheme for air navigation services and network functions in particular.

Noting that Europe's airspace is among the busiest in the world, with over 750 million passengers using EU airports, and this figure is expected to double by 2030, Parliament warns that the increase in air traffic means that Europe's airspace is **fast approaching its maximum capacity and that this problem needs to be urgently addressed.** It also notes that maintaining Europe's consistently high levels of safety and operational conditions is becoming more and more of a challenge, and urges Member States and the Commission to clarify the role of the relevant European bodies.

Members highlight the fact that in the Commission's latest communication on the subject it was estimated that there could be a cumulative impact on EU GDP of EUR 419 billion during the period 2013-2030 in the EU-27, with 328 000jobs being created directly or indirectly and a net saving in CO2 emissions of some 50 million tonnes, if there is a full and timely deployment of the Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR) technology.

The timely introduction of SESAR will bring practical benefits for passengers, resulting in flight times being shortened by approximately 10% (or nine minutes), 50% fewer flight cancellations and delays, and a possible reduction in air fares. However, should the deployment of SESAR be delayed by ten years the overall impact would be catastrophic, since there would be a loss of around EUR 268 billion as a result of a reduced cumulative impact on EU GDP, with some 190 000 fewer jobs being created and some 55 million tonnes less saved in CO_2 emissions.

Parliament asks the Commission to report back:

- on the progress made towards the implementation of the performance scheme by all Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) by December 2012;

- on the progress made with regard to the implementation of the SES legislation by March 2013, including an evaluation of the consequences of the delays in implementing the Functional Airspace Blocks (FAB)s and reiterating that the proper functioning of the SES can only be assured if the various implementation dates are strictly honoured by all concerned.

Political input: Parliament reminds Member States that the latter have publicly committed themselves to achieving the goal of a Single European Sky, and insists that they must remain proactive and involved in the implementation of this legislation. It calls on Member States to **submit national performance plans**

in line with EU performance targets, and to adopt the revised performance targets proposed by the Commission, and it calls on the Commission to **initiate appropriate action** in case of failure to meet the deadlines for the implementation of this legislation.

Members regret the fact that despite its considerable social and environmental benefits the SES project is not sufficiently known or understood by the public, and invite the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to increase their public communication efforts.

Recalling that **4 December 2012 is the deadline for completion of implementation of Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs),** but that the latest reports indicate that the situation is far from complying with this provision of the SES legislation, Parliament remains **extremely concerned that the creation of FABs across Europe is not only behind schedule but also lacks substance.** It calls on the Commission to thoroughly monitor developments and, if necessary, take legal action, including sanctions, vis-à-vis Member States violating their obligations under the SES legislation. Members stress that without FABs the SES cannot be completed. The Commission is asked to:

- propose a strategy to accelerate the implementation of the FABs which includes the full implementation of centralised models (e.g. Network Manager, SESAR Joint Undertaking, Deployment Manager);

- make greater use of its cautioning methods, and, should these not succeed, take out infringement proceedings against those Member States which have not yet signed the agreements for establishing their FABs.

Members feel that the most effective and efficient way of creating the SES is by means of a top-down approach, and therefore ask the Commission to propose measures to eliminate the consequences of the delay in the implementation of FABs, and to switch from the bottom-up to the top-down approach swiftly, in order to ensure that the objectives of the SES II legislative package are achieved.

Member States are asked to:

- ensure that the issue of lack of resources, especially with regard to the National Supervisory Authority, is addressed swiftly at national political level;

- provide the necessary funding as soon as possible for the completion of the SES.

SESAR Deployment Strategy: Members acknowledge that **there has been substantial financial investment by both industry and the EU in research and development for the SESAR technology**, and believes it is now time to put in place the measures necessary to reap the benefits of that investment with the implementation of the SES legislation. Despite the requisite major investment, a number of important and tangible benefits stem from harmonisation, including flight optimisation, fuel efficiency, noise reduction, less air pollution and a reduced impact on climate change, as well as the flexible and safe use of a less fragmented sky. Members highlight the efficiency that greater civil-military coordination would achieve, since using joint infrastructure would result in cost-cutting; emphasises that enhanced interoperability between Member States and the realisation of FABs would also produce benefits in terms of cross border operations. Furthermore, technologies have already been developed by the manufacturers and are currently available, which makes the successful implementation of SESAR an achievable goal.

Members stress that **the military community is a key actor in the SES context** and should be fully involved at all levels and at a very early stage. They urge Member States to speed up their efforts to achieve coordination on the military side.

The Commission is asked to:

- prepare a legislative proposal on the future role of the SESAR Joint Undertaking in good time, as it has a vital part to play in ensuring the success of the SES;

- rapidly to set up the governance, incentive and financial mechanisms, including public funding, that are needed to ensure the timely and effective deployment of SESAR technologies, involving the relevant authorities and stakeholders and paying particular attention to the implementation of innovative financial instruments.

Parliament wants to strengthen the EDA's role in building political awareness, networking, assisting with the deployment phase of SESAR and supporting Member States in financial and operational risk analysis.

Lastly, Members acknowledge that the business case for investment in SESAR technologies is stronger in larger and more congested hubs than in smaller regional airports or airports serving seasonal routes. They maintain, however, that the performance of the overall network would be improved by a wider spread of SESAR capabilities, aided by public funding.