

Allocation of slots at EU airports

2011/0391(COD) - 15/11/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the report by Giommara UGGIAS (ALDE, IT) on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on common rules for the allocation of slots at EU airports (recast). It recommends that the European Parliament's position in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Coordinator's role: in legal terms, the coordinator's essential functions, which consist of allocating slots in an equal and non-discriminatory manner, shall be given to a natural or legal person who or which is not a service provider in the airport, an airline operating from the airport or the managing body of the airport in question. The committee adds that in order to prove that he/she/it does not share common interests with any such entities, the coordinator or schedules facilitator must submit an annual declaration of his/her/its financial interests. Furthermore, the composition of the coordinator's board or supervisory function shall also be independent of the direct interests of the airport managing body, the airline users of that airport and any other entity representing a user or service provider. This shall not, however preclude representatives of such organisations from being members of a board or supervisory function, provided that voting rights are balanced.

Members also add that:

- the coordinator or schedules facilitator, whether as a natural or legal person, must not have been employed by, or worked regularly with, the airport managing body or a service provider or airline operating at or from the airport in question during the two years preceding his/her/its appointment and during the two years from the cessation of his/her/its duties as a coordinator or schedules facilitator;
- the system of financing the coordinator's activities and those of the schedules facilitator shall be such as to guarantee the coordinator's independent status.

The financing referred to shall be provided by **all the air carriers** who operate in the coordinated and schedules facilitated airports, and by those airports in such a way as to ensure that the financial burden is distributed equitably among all interested parties and that the financing does not largely depend on a sole interested party. Member States shall launch a stakeholder consultation procedure, incorporating the possibility of an appeal, in order to ensure transparent, non-discriminatory charging correlating to the service provided by the coordinator or schedules facilitator. Collection of the air carriers' payments shall be the responsibility of the airports concerned, which shall pay those amounts to the coordinator or schedules facilitator. Member States shall ensure that adequate financial, human, technical and material resources and expertise are at the disposal of the coordinator and the schedules facilitator, such as to enable them to carryout their duties at all times.

The coordinator and the schedules facilitator shall furthermore submit to the Commission, to the Member States and to all parties involved in their financing **a separate annual financial report indicating in detail revenue and expenditure relating to their activities.**

Usage rate: under the Commission's proposal on airport slot allocation, a slot would be taken away from an airline if it is used less than 85% of the time. The current threshold is 80%. The committee states that raising the slot series usage rate to 85% seems excessive and is not an appropriate answer to congestion problems. This rate would also lead to carriers 'flying empty' in order not to lose their series allocation,

which is hardly in keeping with the overriding need to address the environmental impact of this mode of transport. The rate would therefore seem to be of little economic or environmental benefit. **An 80-20 ratio should therefore be maintained for series usage rates.**

Financial sanctions: rather than using general fees, Members specify that the managing body of a coordinated airport must establish and apply effective, proportionate and dissuasive **financial sanctions to deal with the return of slots** after the agreed Historic Baseline Dates for the following winter or summer season, respectively, or the retention of unused slots with the aim of dissuading air carriers from belatedly returning slots to the pool, and must hold them liable for having reserved airport infrastructure without using it. The new text sets out a series of principles that must be respected in laying down sanctions.

Revenue from slots trading: Members specify that Member States may adopt measures to **allocate a portion of the revenue generated from the slots trading to a fund in order to cover the costs of developing airport infrastructure and optimising related services.** In the interests of complete transparency, the fund in question shall be determined and approved by an independent supervisory authority as referred to in Directive 2009/12/EC. The fund must at all times be managed in such a way as to ensure that the principles of separate accounting are followed, so that the financial amounts to be allocated from the fund to each airport can be established. The revenues generated from the slot trading at one airport shall be reinvested at the same airport.

Monitoring of secondary trading: lastly, the Commission shall monitor the secondary markets for slots based on the data received from co-ordinators and shall report on relevant trends, including those relating to regional and intra-Union connectivity, in its Annual Analysis of Air Transport Markets.