

Slot utilisation rules at Union airports: temporary relief

2022/0214(COD) - 06/10/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 457 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 95/93 as regards temporary relief from the slot utilisation rules at Community airports due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Regulation aims at introducing specific rules and relieving the general slot usage rules for a limited period of time in order to mitigate the effects on air traffic of an epidemiological crisis and of the war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine. It sets the objective of a gradual return to the ‘use-it-or-lose-it’ rules related to slot allocation at EU airports.

The European Parliament's first-reading position under the ordinary legislative procedure amends the Commission's proposal as follows:

Slot allocation process

During the period between **30 October 2022 and 28 October 2023**, and subject to the availability of airport capacity, a series of slots that has been returned to the slot pool at the end of the scheduling period shall be allocated, upon request, for the next equivalent scheduling period to an air carrier that has operated at least five slots of the series in question during the reference scheduling period.

In addition, during the period from **30 October 2022 to 28 October 2023**, the non-utilisation of a slot may also be justified by the introduction of restrictions by public authorities to deal with a major epidemiological situation, a major natural disaster or major political unrest at one end of a route for which the slot in question has been operated or should have been operated, provided that such restrictions have a significant impact on the possibility of, or demand for, travel.

Slot allocation in response to certain crisis situations

During the period between **30 October 2022 and 25 March 2023**, if an air carrier demonstrates that it has operated the series of slots allocated to it for at least 75% of the time during the scheduling period for which it was allocated, the air carrier in question will be entitled to use the same series of slots in the next equivalent scheduling period.

The European Commission may also, by means of delegated acts, **lower the minimum utilisation rate** for any scheduling period between 30 October 2022 and 28 October 2023 if weekly air traffic falls below 80% (compared to 2019 figures) for **two consecutive weeks** due to COVID-19, another epidemiological situation or as a direct consequence of the Russian war in Ukraine. The percentage value applied will be proportionate to the level of air traffic forecasts by Eurocontrol.

In view of the preparation of schedules by air carriers ahead of the scheduling period, the Commission should endeavour to adopt those delegated acts before the start of the scheduling period, in order to allow air carriers to plan their flight schedules. The Commission may adopt such acts during the scheduling period in case of unforeseen circumstances.

In addition, the new rules provide for the possibility of restoring **air connectivity between the EU and Ukraine** in due course, with an additional 16-week recovery period before the slot usage requirements become applicable again after the reopening of Ukrainian airspace.