Electric aviation – a solution for short- and mid-range flights

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The European Parliament adopted by 414 votes to 118, with 93 abstentions, a resolution on electric aviation – a solution for short and mid-range flights.

Benefits of aircraft electrification

Members are convinced that **cleaner, faster and more convenient air transport options** would increase connectivity and accessibility in smaller, more isolated and sparsely populated areas, including island regions and the outermost regions, and particularly in terms of access to public services, the creation of job opportunities and more sustainable tourism. Stressing the importance of the Union's regional airports for short- and medium-haul electric flights, Parliament called on the Commission to affirm its financial support for regional airports, in particular those actively involved in promoting electric aviation.

The resolution stressed the potential of electric aviation to provide connections between the outermost regions, contribute to their development and partly mitigate the adverse impact of their difficult topography on their economies. It pointed out that in the event of geographical barriers, the time saved using electric flights as a new means of public transport that does not rely on existing roads or rail tracks can be considerable. Moreover, thanks to the electrification of regional aviation, previously abandoned routes could become economically viable.

Parliament reiterated the Commission’s vision that **electrical vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft** should become a staple of passenger transport by 2030, becoming integrated into existing transport systems and contributing to the decarbonisation of the EU, while minimising any adverse environmental impacts. Members are convinced that both eVTOLs and fixed-wing electric aircraft must be seen as complementary forms of new urban air mobility.

Members urged the industry to make use of EASA’s work in defining the first Environmental Protection Technical Specification for the noise assessment of certain eVTOL aircraft, which aims to provide a high and uniform level of environmental protection for European citizens and facilitate their integration into the aviation ecosystem and urban environment.

Investing for the future

Parliament insisted that developing electric aviation for commercial use requires **effective financial and regulatory support** at both national and EU level. Public procurement is an effective tool for the electrification of the industry without disrupting the market.

Members invited the Member States to **explore market incentives** and benefits for the electric aircraft manufacturers, operators and SMEs concerned in order to promote the development and adoption of this eco-friendly technology.

The Commission, in cooperation with Eurocontrol and EASA, should identify the flight routes that are most suitable for full electrification and that would result in more significant CO2 reductions, as this will help the concerned airports to start the necessary adaptations.

Members considered it necessary to examine the possibility of **modifying existing EU State aid rules** to enable the creation of a targeted investment framework that builds on public and private funding to support the emerging resource-intensive eVTOL sector in order to strengthen Europe's strategic autonomy in this area. They also stressed that the **planning and readiness of energy infrastructure** is a key factor in determining the take up of electric and hydrogen-based aviation.

Action in the framework of the EU

Parliament highlighted the importance of adopting a **common strategy** for electric aircraft and urged the Commission to take proactive steps to formulate such a strategy.

The Commission is called on to:

- develop proactive policies to support and develop the industry in close cooperation with existing forums such as the Advisory Council for Aviation Research and Innovation (ACARE) and AZEA which was set up at the initiative of the Commission to bring together all the private and public partners in the aviation ecosystem to prepare for the entry into commercial service of electric and hydrogen-powered aircraft;

- increase awareness about opportunities in green careers in aviation and to encourage national and EU projects;

- launch specific calls to finance projects supporting electrification and actions to reduce the overall impacts of aviation;

- invest in research and development of next generation solid-state batteries that have twice as much energy as lithium-ion batteries and approximately three times higher storage potential;

- encourage, through instruments such as the Net-Zero Industry Act and the European Battery Alliance, decreasing dependencies in the battery supply chain and ensuring sufficient supply of critical raw materials, thereby reducing our external dependencies on batteries;

- developing strategic partnerships with like-minded non-EU countries in the area of raw materials for aeronautics;

- ensure consistency between the development of electric transport and mobility, the required infrastructure and EU policies aimed at increasing European battery production capacity, including the supply of the raw and advanced materials needed for battery production;

- create a policy framework that will support the uptake of electric aircraft technologies, such as channelling part of the revenues from ETS aviation or any taxation on aviation to CAJU;

- create a strategy to ensure that the necessary infrastructure for electric aviation, including power generation, grid connection and charging infrastructure, is deployed commensurate to the uptake of electric aircraft;

- come up with a European strategy for a coordinated approach to the development, certification and deployment of the new generation of aircraft, including eVTOL aircraft, in order to raise awareness among European citizens of its benefits and to boost private and public investment.