

Air transport: common rules for civil aviation security

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The Conciliation Committee reached agreement on a joint text for the regulation. The main points of the compromise package may be summarised as follows: - inspections at airports shall be unannounced. The Commission shall inform the Member States concerned in good time before scheduled inspections; - all staff, including flight crew, together with items carried, shall be screened before being allowed access into security-restricted areas. Where this is not practicable, persons and items shall be subject to continuous appropriate random screening. One year after the entry into force of the Regulation, all staff together with items carried shall be screened before being allowed access into critical parts of security-restricted areas, as identified by the competent authorities of each Member State. By 1 July 2004 the Commission will adopt a common definition of the critical parts of those areas (100% staff screening); - finally, and despite the fact that Council underlined from the beginning its strong resistance to the idea of all countries providing financial aid to the aviation sector, members of the EP delegation stressed the importance of Council committing itself to a fair share of the funding concerning the additional security costs. An interinstitutional declaration to be attached to the final text and published in the Official Journal states that the institutions: recognise that this policy raises important questions in relation to its funding aspects; take into account the policy position taken by the Member States of the EU at the Montreal Ministerial Conference on Aviation Security (where there was agreement that some aspects be financed by the public authorities); take note of the Commission's position that it would consider positively public financing for the compensation of additional security measures; and take note of a study undertaken by the Commission concerning the way the financing is shared between public authorities and the operators.