

Access to the groundhandling market at Community airports

1994/0325(SYN) - 17/01/1996 - Committee of the Regions: opinion

The following concrete proposals could be put forward in terms of amendments to be made to the Commission proposal: - the scope of the directive should apply to airports situated within the territory of the Community that were open to commercial air traffic and that registered at least one million passenger movements or 25 000 tonnes of freight. Articles 4, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12 should not apply to those airports registering at least 4.5 million passenger movements or 150 000 tonnes of freight (Article 2). - There was a need to set up a users' committee with the necessary powers of remit, which would also include representatives of the regions. The users' committee would act in a consultative and supporting role (Article 5). - It should be left up to Member States to decide whether or not they wished to limit the number of service providers offering certain stopover services, this applying both to groundhandling for third parties as well as to self-handling (Articles 6 and 7). - Decisions taken under Article 8, relating to exemptions, should be left to Member States. The Commission should only be allowed to verify or correct national decisions in those cases involving airports that were not fully coordinated under the terms of Regulation (EEC) No 95/93 relating to joint arrangements for the allocation of time slots at Community airports. Member states should be given the opportunity to refuse groundhandling for third parties as well as self-handling services. - As regards the shared use of general airport infrastructures by service providers and users wishing to self-handle, the airport operator should be entitled to an appropriate remuneration in the form of an infrastructure tax or leasing tax for the exploitation of an established commercial opportunity. - In order to take the necessary measures to ensure the free exercise of groundhandling by third parties and self-handling, a transition period of three years would be required after the entry into force of the directive (Articles 6, 7 and 14). - As well as deregulating airport stopover services, urgent action was required in order to align security standards and achieve greater social harmonisation. An appropriate degree of social harmonisation was essential in order to ensure a high level of security in the European air transport sector.