Single European Sky: organisation and use of the airspace

2001/0236(COD) - 27/08/2003 - Commission opinion on Parliament's position at 2nd reading

The European Parliament adopted at second reading 15 amendments to the Common Position of the Council. The Commission can accept 8 amendments in full, 5 in principle, subject to redrafting. It has nonetheless to reject 2 amendment in full. As regards the amendments accepted by the Commission, the Commission believes that these amendments constitute important changes of substance, genuine improvements and useful clarifications in the text. These aim in particular to : - reinstate the text of the Commission's proposal aimed at extending the concept of the European Flight Information Region to the lower airspace; - extend the concept of functional airspace blocks to lower airspace. This amendment could be accepted subject to drafting changes; - clarify that the creation of functional airspace blocks requires taking into account, as appropriate the recommendations of Eurocontrol. It can therefore be accepted subject to redrafting; - add new text and/or delete some text thereby clarifying the spirit of regulation; - set an obligation of result within a certain period of time. However, as the establishment of the European Upper Flight Information Region depends on an ICAO decision, it is more appropriate to set this obligation upon the Commission to initiate the process within a specific timeframe; - define an arbitration process governed by the Commission to solve disputes in relation to the establishment of functional airspace blocks. The Common Position does not provide for mechanisms to ensure that decisions of Member States on this issue will lead the timely and efficient reconfiguration of air traffic services into few homogeneous blocks. Lastly, the Commission rejected an amendment that links the change in the classification of airspace to the creation of the European Upper Flight Information Region and it specifies the nature of such classification as well as an amendment which reinstates the text of the Commission' proposal on the civil-military co-ordination. This wording no longer fits in with the text of the Common Position and its legal basis, given the impact it has on military operations and training.