Air transport: ratification by the Community of the Protocol on the accession to the revised Eurocontrol Convention

2003/0214(AVC) - 24/09/2003 - Initial legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to approve in the name of the European Community the Protocol on the accession of the European Community to the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (Eurocontrol). PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision. CONTENT: the European Commission is proposing the ratification by the Community of the Protocol on the accession of the European Community to the revised Eurocontrol Convention. This ratification is the logical consequence of the signature of the Eurocontrol accession Protocol which took place on 8 October 2002 following a decision of the Commission of 6 June 2002. The accession Protocol specifies the legal provisions enabling the Community to become a full member of Eurocontrol. Ratification of the Accession Protocol marks the end of a process that began in 1997. The Parties to Eurocontrol adopted the Protocol consolidating the Eurocontrol Convention in June 1997. Community accession to Eurocontrol is justified by the fact that the revised Convention authorises Eurocontrol to adopt measures which are binding on the Member States. The Community must participate in this organisation to enable such measures to be adopted in areas where the Community has competence. The situation in this respect has evolved as a result of the Single European Sky initiative: the Commission proposals in the process of adoption by Council and the European Parliament envisage an active role for the Community, backed by Eurocontrol's technical expertise. Close cooperation will therefore have to be developed between the Community and Eurocontrol on two levels, in order to ensure that the rules and strategies are consistent and to avoid duplication of efforts by the two parties: - Community accession to Eurocontrol will enable the Community to contribute to Eurocontrol's political activities in order to align them on the Community initiative - the Single European Sky - and to place this initiative in a pan-European context; - the specialist work needed to prepare the Community rules in the context of the Single European Sky initiative will be entrusted to Eurocontrol (i.e. the Agency) in respect of matters for which it has competence, with due regard to conditions to be included in a cooperation agreement between the Commission and Eurocontrol. This (administrative) cooperation agreement between the Commission and Eurocontrol will have to specify those conditions.