Air transport safety: third countries aircraft using Community airports

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By adopting the draft report by Antonio GONZALEZ TRIVINO (E, PES) the Committee on Transport and Tourism warmly welcomed the proposal for a directive establishing a safety assessment of third countries aircraft using Community airports. The proposal is in line with a resolution adopted by Parliament in July 1997, asking for a system of safety checks similar to state control of ports in the maritime sector and the drawing up of a black list of third-country carriers which do not meet EU safety standards. The rapporteur could agree with the Commission's alternative to checking third-country planes by initially targeting the airlines rather than the aviation authorities. Article 5 of the directive provides for ramp inspections of all aircraft showing signs of poor maintenance or with obvious damage or which have been reported to perform unusual manoeuvres in EU airspace. The Committee amended this article in order to ensure that all aircraft, all operators and all countries of registration whose authorities are suspected of non-compliance with international safety standards should be inspected. Said the rapporteur: "What is required is an effective deterrent". Moreover,it is important that national inspectors authorised to conduct ramp checks do not neglect these smaller airports where the number of incidents in relation to the total number of movements is often greater, specially as the carriers, operating on far tighter budgets, trend to concentrate their operations at second-tier EU airports like Ostend, Maastricht and Rimini.