

Access to the groundhandling market at Community airports

1994/0325(SYN) - 16/11/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

Adopting the report by Mr Barry SEAL (PSE, UK), the European Parliament approved the proposal for a directive with numerous substantive amendments: - concerned at the social repercussions of the directive, the European Parliament called for the Commission to study the impact of this directive and the air transport liberalization in general on employment and to publish the results of such studies. It also called in this context for the Member States to guarantee suitable levels of social protection for service providers' staff; - concerning the scope of the directive: the European Parliament wished it to apply to: . airports with a capacity of 1 million passengers a year or airports which handled 25,000 tonnes of freight a year, . as regards free access to the groundhandling services market: airports with annual traffic of 4.5 million passengers a year or 50,000 tonnes of freight a year which had recorded at least 2 million passenger movements or 50,000 tonnes of freight over the previous eighteen months; - the European Parliament redefined the concept of management body as the legal person wholly or partly responsible for managing one or more airports and for coordinating and supervising the activities of the different operators. Where several separate bodies were responsible in one airport, each body must comply with the directive; - concerning the provision of services: . an airport user cannot provide groundhandling services unless it has clearly unbundled the accounts of its transport activity and supply of groundhandling services to third parties, . where a groundhandling service provider carries out other commercial activities, the same obligation to unbundle the accounts applies; Reports must be sent to the Commission and to the competent authority in the Member State in question on any service providers which fail to unbundle their accounts; - concerning the social aspects: the European Parliament called for priority to be given to safeguarding jobs where staff restructuring problems arise from the implementation of this directive. Similarly, it has included a provision on the employee's rights, especially the right to be represented by a trade union; - concerning the committee: the European Parliament called for airport staff to be represented on the Users' Committee. The chairman of this committee should be independent. The Users' Committee should help the management body select groundhandling service providers; - concerning free access to the groundhandling service market: the European Parliament called for the directive to apply three (not two) years after its entry into force. Member States could limit the number of service providers for an additional category of services (aircraft cleaning and air-side passengers, baggage and freight transport services) and could also allow air-side self-handling by airport users for a maximum of two services per category (fuel handling, baggage handling etc.); - the European Parliament also provided for a payment of a fee by users providing handling services and using the airport infrastructure; - it limited derogations to a restricted and duly justified number of cases; - concerning the choice of service providers: the European Parliament simplified the selection procedure; - finally, the European Parliament provided for a groundhandler's qualification for all aircraft groundhandlers employed by the airport. It also included a provision relating to runway traffic (adherence to turnround times); - the Commission was called on to submit a report on general safety in airports, national regulations for the approval of groundhandling services and compliance with Community rules in this area to the European Parliament and the Council by 30 June 1996