Relations with the Russian Federation and China in the field of air transport

2005/2085(INI) - 17/01/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Roberts **ZILE** (UENS, LV) on relations with the Russian Federation and China in the field of air transport.

China: Parliament welcomed the Commission's general response to the process of growth, modernisation and liberalisation currently underway in Chinese commercial aviation, and acknowledged the desirability of a comprehensive aviation agreement between the EU and China. It felt, however, that prior to the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement, a horizontal agreement should be reached so that China's current bilateral air service agreements with various Member States could be brought into line with the Court of Justice's 'open skies' judgment. The negotiation of such an agreement would strengthen the EU's position and would be more beneficial to stakeholders and consumers than a series of revised bilateral agreements essentially concerned with traffic rights.

Parliament called on the Council to extend the Commission's negotiating mandate to cover the provision of the necessary airport and safety infrastructures and air traffic control over Chinese airspace, which unfortunately are inadequate at present and pose an obstacle to the development of aviation relations. It acknowledged the excellent work the Commission is carrying out with its Chinese partners, but regretted that it has not had access to the terms of the negotiating mandate the Commission now seeks from the Council in respect of China. Parliament insisted that it be better integrated in the process of negotiating the agreement. It also insisted that the provisions of a balanced conclusion to negotiations with China on air cargo should be implemented without delay and if necessary before completion of negotiations on passenger traffic.

Russia: Parliament noted that the charges imposed by Russia for flights over its territory are in violation of international law and have not, in the main, been used for the promised improvement of air traffic control management but rather to subsidise Russia's own airline, in breach of competition law. It insisted to the Commission and Council that no comprehensive agreement should be concluded without the immediate and complete abolition of Russian overflight charges. Furthermore, no modified charging scheme should be agreed to replace the current overflight charging regime. Parliament called on the Commission not to conclude an agreement on the Russian Federation's accession to the World Trade Organisation while Russia continues to charge for Siberian overflights. In this context, Parliament asked the Commission to evaluate all arguments related to modernisation, capital investment and technical requirements in the links between the European Union's and Russia's aviation industries and their differences over overflight charging.

Parliament acknowledged the excellent work the Commission is carrying out with its Russian partners, but regretted that it has not had access to the terms of the negotiating mandate the Commission now seeks from the Council in respect of Russia. Again, it insisted on being better integrated in the process of negotiating the agreement.

China and Russia: Negotiations can only be successfully concluded with both China and Russia if stakeholders are able to advise the Commission and are fully apprised of the progress of negotiations and the positions adopted therein. Parliament insisted that no mandate should be granted which does not inexorably link increased access to both China's and Russia's markets to the creation of a 'level playing

field' through the convergence of operating standards in the areas of air traffic control and management, staff training and operating standards and aviation security and safety. The principle of reciprocity must be applied.