

Access to the groundhandling market at Community airports

1994/0325(SYN) - 24/01/2007 - Follow-up document

The Commission has published a report on the application of Council Directive 96/67/EC on access to the ground handling market at Community airports.

In 2002, following a Commission request, a study on “the quality and efficiency of ground handling services at EU airports as a result of the implementation of Council Directive 96/67/EC” was carried out. Based on the results of this study, the Commission finds that the Directive has led to:

- a) increased competition at many airports, which previously were either closed or static markets;
- b) better value for money spent on ground handling services;
- c) greater pressure on the prices for ground handling services;
- d) dilatory actions in some instances on the part of competent authorities when fully applying the Directive;
- e) some impact on employment conditions but no evidence of an overall reduction of jobs; and
- f) a modest shake-up in market shares in ground handling services amongst some of the EU's most important economic airports.

In March 2003 the Commission services published a Consultation paper on issues regarding a possible revision of the Directive. Member States, the accession countries and interested parties all added extensively to the consultation process. Those with a stake in the air transport industry recognise that there is room for improvement and have therefore called for greater simplification of current provisions. They also call for a clarification of the Directive's scope.

Following on from this report, the consultation process as well as taking account of Parliament's views on this matter, the Commission intends to examine, not only ways in which to simplify and clarify the Directive but also ways in which to open up the market further. It also intends to examine the possibility of regulating certain issues, which have come to the forefront in ground handling services since the application of the current Directive. Such issues concern: the definition of insurance requirements; quality standards applicable at an airport; and an improved procedure for the selection of service suppliers.