



## Airport reform package: MEPs question added value for travellers

Committees: Committee on Transport and Tourism

**The Commission's legislative proposals for more competitive ground-handling services, better usage of take-off and landing slots and a harmonised approach to reduce noise nuisance around airports came under severe fire during a hearing with independent experts, representatives of airlines, airports, national aviation authorities and citizens' NGOs in the Transport and Tourism Committee on Tuesday 8 May.**

Despite the clear need to address increasing air traffic congestion around and in Europe's main airports, the Commission's recent proposals raised serious concerns within the industry and amongst MEPs.

Airline associations as well as EP rapporteur Giommaria Uggias (ALDE, IT) look forward to secondary trading of slots as a means to increase usage of existing capacity, but they are opposed to any future requirement imposed on airlines to use 85% of an allocated slot, as compared to the current 80%, in order to keep their slot. MEPs voiced concerns that carriers might take off empty, just to use the slot.

The hearing delivered little evidence to MEPs that the Commission plan to impose a choice of 3 rather than 2 ground-handling service providers in airports with more than 5 million passengers per year would translate into better baggage and ground-handling services for customers. Whereas rapporteur Artur Zasada (EPP, PL), asked for a "more ambitious proposal", other MEPs suggested rejecting the proposal, because they fear that working conditions would deteriorate and there would be little or no improvement in the quality of services to passengers.

On noise reduction, rapporteur Jörg Leichtfried (S&D, AT), welcomed the Commission's "balanced approach" as a management tool for local authorities when the interests of local residents conflict with those of airport operators, but felt that the proposal was too far-reaching.

*In the chair: Brian Simpson (S&D, UK)*

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