



MEPs back CO2 permit exemption for long-haul flights

Committees Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Plenary sessions [03-04-2014 - 12:02]

EU legislation on aviation emission allowances would cover only intra-EU flights until the start of 2017, but would apply to all flights to or from the EU thereafter, under rules approved by Parliament on Thursday. The legislation would also require EU member states to report on how they spend revenue from auctioning emission allowances.

“For the environment, this text is not only better than the Council position, but also better than the Commission proposal. I thank my colleagues for giving it the support it deserved”, said lead MEP Peter Liese (EPP, DE) on Wednesday. The informal agreement struck with Council of Ministers was approved by 458 votes to 120 with 24 abstentions, despite having been opposed by the Environment Committee in March.

“The key element for us concerns the scope. The Emissions Trading System will again apply in full after 2016. Parliament could not accept the Council’s wish to ‘stop the clock’ until 2020. We have the next International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) assembly in 2016, and if it fails to deliver a global agreement, then nobody could justify our maintaining such an exemption for another four years”, Mr Liese added.

Clarity on how ETS auction revenues are spent

In negotiations, MEPs also secured provisions requiring member states to report on how they spend revenues from ETS allowance auctions. Those revenues should be used to tackle climate change and fund research, inter alia for low-emissions transport, in particular in aeronautics. Such transparency is key to underpin the EU’s international commitments, MEPs say.

Next steps

The legislation now needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers.

Background

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) agreed at its 38th assembly to adopt a global market-based measure (MBM) on aviation greenhouse gas emissions in 2016, to be implemented by 2020. To bridge the time gap, the Commission tabled new draft legislation in 2013 which aimed to reduce the proportion of emissions to which the ETS scheme would apply for flights to and from countries outside the EU until 2020.

Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary legislative procedure), first reading agreement

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