



Aviation emissions: Environment MEPs reject informal deal with EU ministers

Committees Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety [19-03-2014 - 17:17]

Draft plans to exempt intercontinental flights' greenhouse gas emissions from the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) until the start of 2017 were rejected by Environment Committee MEPs on Wednesday, even though they had been informally agreed with EU ministers. Parliament as whole will vote on the file on Thursday, 3 April.

Under the proposed revision, as informally agreed with the Greek Presidency of the Council, EU legislation on aviation emissions allowances would cover only intra-EU flights until the start of 2017, and all flights to or from the EU thereafter. The Environment Committee rejected this deal by 29 votes to 29, with no abstentions.

But despite this outcome, Peter Liese (EPP, DE), who is steering the legislation through Parliament, remained "optimistic that the plenary will support the compromise".

"I understand that many colleagues are unhappy with the attitude of member states and the poor ambition of the EU environment and transport ministers in this issue. But in politics you need to live up with reality. Parliament's delegation achieved a lot in the negotiations with the Council. Compared to the Commission proposal, the compromise is more ambitious because we go back to full scope in 2016, instead of 2020" he added.

Groote: "MEPs do not like being bullied by third countries"

"Today's vote simply means that MEPs do not like being bullied by third countries into dismantling EU climate legislation. We are committed to making aviation emission reductions contribute to our climate change policies. We proposed to earmark ETS revenues for climate action, so as to show our partners that the ETS is not a tax but the cornerstone of our climate policy. Unfortunately, EU member states don't seem to like this idea. As a result, the ETS legislation could be back with full scope after April" said Environment Committee chair Matthias Groote (S&D, DE).

Background

The International Civil Aviation Organization agreed at its 38th assembly to adopt a global market-based measure (MBM) to reduce aviation emissions in 2016, to be implemented by 2020. In response, and in order to further promote the global MBM momentum, the European Commission proposed to reduce the proportion of emissions (from flights to and from countries outside the EU) to which the EU ETS applies for the period up to 2020, when the global MBM begins.

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