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*Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

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**2012/2299(INI)**

03.05.2013

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on the EU's External Aviation Policy – Addressing Future Challenges  
(2012/2299(INI)) Rapporteur: Georges Bach

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Transport and Tourism, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas the number of job cuts implemented and scheduled by European airlines since 2012 amounts to more than 20 000;
- B. whereas the European social partners in aviation, in the context of a dialogue on the impact of the global crisis in civil aviation held on 29 January 2013, agreed that coordinated and comprehensive action is necessary at international level;
  - 1. Notes that European aviation currently provides employment for 5.1 million people and is making a vital contribution both to economic growth and to regional and social cohesion;
  - 2. Notes that air transport is a major contributor to the economy and employment, serving 790 million passengers on European airlines in 2012 and making an estimated annual contribution to European GDP of EUR 365 billion;
  - 3. Welcomes the progress made in the development of a common Union approach to its external aviation policy; believes that this common approach needs to be strengthened in future in order to keep up with international competition;
  - 4. Emphasises the importance of tools such as the Joint Committee system for creating common approaches to aviation-specific issues;
  - 5. Welcomes the progress made in the creation of a larger European Common Aviation Area through significant Air Transport Agreements with neighbouring countries, and welcomes the fact that these have led to alignment of legal frameworks to EU legislation in important areas such as aviation safety, protection against threats to public safety, air traffic management, environment, air passenger rights, economic regulation and social aspects;
  - 6. Welcomes the comprehensive EU-US Air Transport Agreement and the positive impact it has had on both economies as well as the estimated 80 000 new jobs which were created in the first five years; calls on the Commission to conclude comprehensive Air Transport Agreements with other important partners such as Brazil, Australia and New Zealand as quickly as possible;
  - 7. Points out that the implementation of the Community's external aviation policy has allowed substantial progress to be made in bringing national air service agreements into line with EU law and has helped to maximise the potential of the single market insofar as it facilitates the consolidation of the EU aviation industry at a time when globalisation calls for stronger economic actors to resist foreign competition;
  - 8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to press ahead with the implementation of the Single European Sky and the European Air Traffic Management System for a

Single European Sky (SESAR); notes that the development of the Single European Sky, when fully implemented, will create significant direct and indirect employment opportunities;

9. Points out that the European aviation industry would have great potential for growth if there were fair and open competition among all countries, enabling aviation to fully realise its potential contribution to the European economy;
10. Stresses, therefore, that Air Transport Agreements with neighbouring countries and like-minded partners must contain a regulatory framework for fair competition;
11. Points out that European hubs need to be strengthened by corresponding Air Transport Agreements and investments promoting better infrastructure connections between hub airports, their neighbouring regional airports and their surrounding areas to deliver growth and economic multiplier effects, attracting further direct foreign investment, creating additional jobs and protecting jobs with European airlines, airports and third-party service providers;
12. Considers that potential obstacles to growth and employment might lie in differences in the national taxes levied on the aviation sector, in congestion of airports and airspace within the EU, in the variable rates of air navigation and airport charges and in the application of lower social standards and differing rules on state aid outside the EU;
13. Calls on the Member States to consider whether their taxes, fees and duties which affect costs faced by airlines could be damaging to global competition;
14. Calls on the Commission, as it seeks to boost competitiveness and open up the aviation market more widely, to establish a legal framework compatible with safety, labour and social standards, protection of jobs and working conditions, air safety – including provisions on working hours and flying times in order to prevent fatigue – environmental standards and qualitative improvements, the object being to prevent competition from becoming a race to the bottom in terms of standards;
15. Stresses that plans to liberalise the aviation sector, for example in the areas of ground handling services and flying duty, must not be allowed to impact negatively on employees or the public; stresses that liberalisation plans must involve an assessment of the social impact thereof;
16. Points out that there is a great deal of competition between carriers as a result of low-cost airlines, which make up 40% of the EU aviation market; stresses that, where a Member State has ratified ILO Conventions 87 and 98, airline companies must comply with the fundamental rights provisions thereof regarding freedom of assembly, as well as the recognition of employee representatives and wage agreements, in which connection compliance must be monitored and infringements penalised;
17. Stresses that the reform of ownership and control of airlines proposed by the Commission may only be implemented – if at all – on the basis of clear rules and following a social impact assessment as well as consultation and full inclusion of the social partners; points out that such a reform must be based on the aim of creating a level playing field between

the EU and third countries;

18. Calls on the Commission, when conducting negotiations on the expansion of aviation relations, to ensure that Parliament and all the relevant stakeholders, including the social partners, are involved in order to deliver the best outcome in the shaping of measures, especially in terms of employment potential and growth in the sector; considers that social impact assessments must be carried out and heeded;
19. Points out that airlines from third countries must comply with the fundamental rights provisions of the ILO conventions, such as those on freedom of assembly, the establishment of workers' representative bodies and the recognition of wage agreements, in particular Article 5 of Convention 87; calls on the Commission and the Member States to enshrine binding social clauses and ILO standards in international Air Transport Agreements and to penalise infringements thereof;
20. Notes that the increasing market share taken up by low-cost airlines heavily impacts on European competition, modifies the market for short- and medium-haul flights and has a negative impact on the social protection of employees;
21. Believes that, although network carriers are facing stiff competition from low-cost carriers, they can still complement each other in view of the new challenges in the long-haul sector in markets outside the EU;
22. Believes that a strong EU external aviation policy focusing on the most significant growth markets in the long-haul sector would open up new economic opportunities for EU airlines, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region;
23. Calls on the Commission, when revising Regulation (EC) No 868/2004 on pricing, to pay greater heed to the quality of social security systems and to labour standards for employees;
24. Considers that its decision on social security for mobile employees is a suitable way to put a stop to some operators' attempts to play national social security systems off against one another, to the detriment of employees;
25. Expects the Commission to ensure that airlines comply with these rules and to take appropriate steps should this not be the case.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	23.4.2013
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 35 -: 5 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Regina Bastos, Edit Bauer, Heinz K. Becker, Phil Bennion, Pervenche Berès, Viliija Blinkevičiūtė, Milan Cabrnock, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Minodora Cliveti, Marije Cornelissen, Emer Costello, Frédéric Daerden, Thomas Händel, Marian Harkin, Nadja Hirsch, Stephen Hughes, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Thomas Mann, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Siiri Oviir, Konstantinos Poupakis, Sylvana Rapti, Licia Ronzulli, Elisabeth Schroedter, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska, Jutta Steinruck, Traian Ungureanu, Andrea Zanoni
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Georges Bach, Edite Estrela, Jelko Kacin, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Antigoni Papadopoulou, Csaba Sógor, Tatjana Ždanoka
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</b>	Anna Hedh, Anna Záborská