



29.2.2016

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition 0539/2013 by Christopher Burns (French), on behalf of citizens living around the airports, on Airport noise

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner, who lives on the Brussels periphery, requests the European Union to regulate airport noise and adopt stricter measures to protect hundreds of thousands of European citizens living around airports.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 19 November 2013. Information requested from Commission under Rule 216(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 31 March 2014

Noise is a relative problem, because the assessment of noise depends on the place and time, and because noise as such is a subjective sensation. That is why it is important that local decision-makers pursue a sound aviation and regional policy, and at the same time a thorough public health policy, which protects citizens from excessive noise levels of any source. Local decision-makers are therefore best placed to strike the balance between these two policy objectives and to take tailor-made decisions for particular airports. Decisions ruled by the EU may not be able to catch this delicate equilibrium at a particular airport.

The European Union intervenes by offering a robust assessment framework which identifies the noise problems (where, when and to which degree exactly), assesses the range of mitigating measures, leads to the selection of a range of cost-effective noise mitigating

measures, and organizes a consultation process¹.

New European legislation, currently awaiting adoption by the European Parliament and the Council, will link this noise assessment process even closer with the strategic noise mapping obligations which Member States have under the Environmental Noise Directive². Under this Directive, Member States may set noise protection targets.

Conclusion

It is up to the Belgian decision-makers to evaluate the situation regarding the noise levels from the Zaventem airport. In this matter, the Commission provides the Member States with the framework for the assessment of the noise levels.

4. Commission reply (REV), received on 29 February 2016

Noise is a relative problem, where the assessment of noise depends on place and time, and is a subjective sensation. That is why it is important that local decision-makers pursue a sound aviation and regional policy and at the same time a thorough public health policy, which protects citizens from excessive noise levels of any source. Local decision-makers are therefore best placed to strike the balance between these two policy objectives and are most able to take tailor-made decisions for particular airports. Decisions taken by the EU may not be able to catch this delicate equilibrium which may be different at different airports.

The European Union intervenes by offering a robust assessment framework for the competent national authorities, which identifies the noise problems (where, when and to which degree exactly), assesses the range of efficient mitigating measures, leads to the selection of a basket of cost-effective noise mitigating measures, and organizes a consultation process.³

New European legislation, currently awaiting adoption by the European Parliament and the Council, will link this noise assessment process even closer with the strategic noise mapping obligations which Member States have under the Environmental Noise Directive⁴. Under this Directive, Member States may set noise protection targets and are obliged to organise a consultation on the noise action plans.

The Conclusion

It is up to the Belgium's decision-makers to evaluate the situation regarding the noise levels at Zaventem airport. In this matter the Commission provides the Member States with the framework for taking concrete measures.

¹ Directive 2002/30/EC of 28 March 2002 on the establishment of rules and procedures with regard to the introduction of noise-related operating restrictions at Community airports.

² Directive 2002/49/EC of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment of environmental noise.

³ Directive 2002/30/EC of 28 March 2002 on the establishment of rules and procedures with regard to the introduction of noise-related operating restrictions at Community airports

⁴ Directive 2002/49/EC of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment of environmental noise.