



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy



13.03.09

COM (2009) 121 - Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending regulation (eec) no 95/93 on common rules for the allocation of slots at community airports

In the light of the global economic and financial crisis, and the significant reduction in air traffic over the winter 2008/09 scheduling season, the Commission has issued a proposal for a regulation amending regulation 95/93 on the common rules for allocation of slots at community airports. More than 80% of European airports have seen a reduction in traffic (8% to 10% in passenger traffic and 25% to 30% in cargo traffic in January 2009), which means that the economic crisis is hitting the whole of the European air transport sector. The point of reference for the Regulation is the allocation and utilisation of slots during one season ('use-it-or-lose-it' principle) and in particular the situation at the end of the season after the slots have actually been used. In particular, the regulation stipulates that air carriers will not be entitled to the same series of slots in the next equivalent scheduling season, unless they can prove to the satisfaction of the coordinator that they have operated them, as cleared by the coordinator, for at least 80% of the time during the season for which they were allocated. The Community must therefore act to guarantee in a clear and unequivocal fashion, legal certainty concerning the application of the 'use-it-or-lose-it' rule for scheduling seasons affected by the crisis. It is therefore being proposed that a new Article 10c will be inserted into the Regulation, laying down that coordinators must accept, against the background of the economic crisis, that air carriers are entitled to the same slots in the summer 2010 scheduling season as allocated to them for the summer 2009 scheduling season.



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The European Parliament (March, Strasbourg Session)

Apart from the European Economic Rescue plans and the upcoming EU Summit, key issues which will be discussed during the March Strasbourg Session of the European Parliament (EP) will include rules offering greater protection to ship's passengers in the event of an accident. The "Eurovignette" directive, which will charge lorries according to the amount they pollute will also feature in the discussions.

Eurovignette:

On Tuesday, MEPs debated proposals to allow EU countries to integrate social and environmental costs caused by trucks into road charges and tolls. Socialist MEP Said El Khadraoui who is guiding the proposals through parliament said that the new law will be an incentive for the transport sector to become economically more effective and less harmful to the environment. He argued that the levies should be reinvested in transport infrastructure and cutting environmental impact.

Cleaner, Quieter and Safer Cars

Members of the Parliament's Internal Market Committee will propose to beef up plans to introduce new rules on the registration, sale and use of cars, with the aim of improving road safety and protecting the environment better. This will lead to the EU having a simpler, standardized system for the type-approval of motor vehicles.



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European Car Industry Update

The Competitiveness Council adopted conclusions on the 5th of March aimed at strengthening the EU's efforts to tackle the crisis of the car industry crisis and support the sector. The car industry is a key sector of the European economy contributing to employment, innovation and competitiveness in Europe. The industry must strive to continue developing the skills of its workforces. The focus should be on investment in innovative and green technologies. Renewal of the car fleet should also be encouraged to boost demand for new, safer and environmentally friendlier vehicles. The Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have been invited to present proposals for supporting measures consistent with the principles of the internal market and the need to prevent distortion of competition. The Council lastly stressed the importance of avoiding protectionism and discriminatory measures in the global car market.

Further reading: Council Conclusions: -

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/106515.pdf

European Parliament News Update

Privacy and Security on the Internet

Greek Socialist MEP Mr Lambrinidis is preparing a report for fellow MEPs on the internet and fundamental rights. A key issue is the limits of consent of the user for the use of his or her data on the web. Mr Lambrinidis told the hearing that: "Internet companies and governments clearly have a lot more power and knowledge than individual users". In addition, companies often offer more attractive terms for their services in exchange for lower privacy protection. The Lambrinidis report also covers the issue of privacy on the internet, and calls for a better and more efficient protection of user data, such as the "right to obtain the permanent deletion of personal data located on internet websites".



The Lambrinidis' report, is due to be discussed by the whole parliament in the week of 23 March.

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Notes from the European Parliament

Roaming: Vote in European Parliament paves way for swift agreement on lower SMS and data roaming charges

"Yesterday's vote in the European Parliament is very good news for consumers all over Europe. In view of the current economic downturn, the Parliament is right in wanting to strengthen the purchasing power of European consumers as of this summer, which will encourage them to make even more use of their mobile phones", said Viviane Reding, the EU's Telecoms Commissioner, who had initiated the new roaming legislation and attended the Committee vote in Strasbourg on the 9th of March.

The European Parliament, through a vote in its Industry Committee, gave strong support to the European Commission's proposals to reduce, as of 1 July, consumer roaming charges for sending text messages and downloading data in the EU. The Commission proposed in September 2008 to make sure that consumers in the EU do not have to pay more than €0.11 per roamed SMS in the EU (excluding VAT). At present, SMS roaming charges in the EU are on average €0.28 per roamed SMS and can go up to over €0.80 in some countries. The Parliament's Committee also voted in favour of ambitious measures to reduce the cost of data roaming charges (the cost for surfing the web or downloading data via a mobile connection abroad). To pave the way for lower consumer charges, the Industry Committee voted in favour of a cap on inter-operator charges of €0.50 per megabyte of roamed data. The Commission had proposed such a cap, but at €1 per megabyte. Finally the Industry Committee voted for an obligation of operators to charge

Background Information:

- The EU Roaming Regulation of 2007 currently limits the amount operators can charge customers for roaming calls in other EU countries to €0.46 per minute for calls made abroad and to €0.22 per minute for calls received abroad (excluding VAT). In 2005 – before the EU intervened – the average charge for a roaming call was €1.10 per minute.
- In June 2008, a study showed that high prices and a lack of transparency were slowing the take up of data roaming services in the EU. In August 2008, the cost of sending a text message abroad was reported at €0.29 without any change compared to the situation one year ago, in spite of repeated calls from



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roamed calls by the second from the first second of a mobile call abroad. The Commission had previously proposed to charge from the 31st second). The Commission had identified that consumers currently pay around 20% too much for roamed calls abroad because of imprecise billing methods.

European Commission News

Commission welcomes the adoption of the Directive on airport charges by the European Parliament and the Council

On 11th March, the EU legislators agreed, on a Directive on airport charges. Vice-President Antonio Tajani, responsible for transport said: "I am delighted with this outcome: it is an important first step in addressing airport charges in Community law. Airport charges must be transparent and non-discriminatory, which will benefit the citizens of Europe."



The Directive provides a clear legal framework for setting airport charges and reflects current commercial practices. Once implemented, the new legislation will promote better dialogue between airlines and airports. It is essential to ensure transparency, non-discrimination and appropriate consultation between airlines and airports under an independent regulator in each Member State.

COM (2009) 115 - Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Report on Progress in creating the Internal Gas and Electricity Market

Over the past five years, significant improvements have taken place in the EU electricity and gas market. Market participants are now better prepared to adapt to the rapid economic and environmental changes – particularly in dealing with the specific challenges that climate change poses to the energy sector. While these developments are encouraging and underline the benefits of the liberalisation process, the full potential of liberalisation has not yet been realised. There are still Member States whose existing legislation (second internal



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market package) has not yet been properly implemented and therefore the need for new legislation has become apparent.

The purposes of the present report, is to identify the shortcomings of the current situation and to indicate the areas in which further action is needed. The input for this report comes in two forms: national reports submitted by national regulators and Eurostat data on end prices. The national reports were submitted to the Commission in the second half of 2008 and they mainly cover 2007; Eurostat data were available for the first half of 2008.



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MARITIME STRATEGY UPDATE

Maritime safety: towards better prevention of maritime accidents

On 11 March 2009 the European Parliament finally approved the third package of measures for maritime safety after the agreement reached in conciliation last December and approval by the Council.

Compensation for passengers in the event of shipping accidents and an EU blacklist of substandard ships are among highlights of the third maritime package. The seven pieces of legislation in the package – also known as “Erika III” – name after the 1999 Erica oil spill – will improve both the safety of ships and the action taken in the event of an accident. This package covers not just compensation for passengers but also ship inspections, port state control, shipping accident investigations and the choice of the authority that decides where a ship in distress should go.

Commission Vice-President Tajani said that he was particularly satisfied with the agreement reached between the Parliament and the Council, because it represented a significant step towards improved prevention of maritime accidents.

With this package, the European Union will have a completely overhauled system for monitoring vessels in its ports. The new rules provide for a range of measures including:

- Permanent blacklisting of dangerous ships, and tougher and more frequent inspections;
- Stricter insurance requirements for ship-owners and better compensation to passengers in the event of accidents;
- Mandatory compliance with international safety standards for ships flying a member state flag;
- An independent authority to be set up in each Member State with the power to launch rescue operations and decide where to take ships in distress.

Further reading: [Press Release from the European Parliament](#)

(The Maritime Strategy must not be confused with the Maritime Transport Strategy till 2018 which has been recently issued)

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