

Brussels, 16 November 2005

Rapid agreement reached on airline blacklist

The Commission, Parliament and the Council have reached agreement on the proposal for a regulation on air carrier identity. The way is now clear for adopting this ambitious piece of legislation by the end of the year. The regulation introduces two innovations: a blacklist of airlines which have been banned for safety reasons, and passenger information about the identity of the air carrier which is operating their flight. "European citizens will all be able to consult the blacklist of airlines that do not meet European safety criteria. After the accidents over the summer, the European Union is responding by taking action, by addressing citizens' concerns about protection, and finding solutions for them quickly," said Jacques Barrot, the Commission's Vice-President responsible for Transport.

The text that Parliament voted for today is the successful outcome of some exemplary cooperation between the European institutions. Europe will now have its own means of imposing flight bans and restrictions on all airlines that are considered to be dangerous. These measures can be imposed without discrimination on all carriers, regardless of whether they are European or non-European. The measures will be imposed on the basis of common safety criteria that are applicable in all States of the European Union. The new regulation will thus give all passengers in Europe exactly the same guarantees on safety. It should also act as a deterrent to airlines with lax safety standards, as well as providing a coordinated approach to combat the potential confusion of having separate national blacklists.

More safety for passengers

These advances in safety will be complemented by more transparency for passengers: the list of airlines on which bans have been imposed will be published and passengers will always have the right to information about the identity of the carrier which will operate the flight they have booked. The blacklist will also provide useful information for anyone wishing to travel outside the European Union, where the flight bans cannot be applied, and will give more rights to these passengers. If an airline appears on the blacklist, passengers will be entitled to a refund or to be re-routed to their final destination.

The common safety criteria, which are listed in the annex to the regulation, were drawn up on the basis of work performed by a committee of national experts in aviation safety and relate essentially to the findings of "SAFA" inspections carried out at European airports ([IP/04/122](#)), the use of badly maintained, antiquated or obsolete aircraft, the inability of the airlines involved to remedy any identified shortcomings, and the inability of the authority responsible for overseeing an operator to perform this task.

The new regulation will be one of a range of coordinated measures aimed at improving aviation safety, as announced by Vice-President Barrot at the beginning of September. These initiatives include the proposal adopted yesterday by the Commission to broaden the range of tasks performed by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) ([IP/05/1422](#)), and the tightening of inspection arrangements for aircraft from non-EU countries within the framework of Directive 2004/36/EC on the safety of third-country aircraft using Community airports (the “SAFA” Directive). The inspection programme for these aircraft will soon be managed by the EASA.

Today’s vote in the EP was taken on the basis of a proposal made by the Commission on 16 February 2005 (see [IP/05/182](#))

See also SAFA website: <http://www.jaa.nl/safa/safa.html>