



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

MEMO

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Questions and answers: EU – Qatar aviation agreement

Questions & Answers

1. Overview

The goal of Europe's Aviation Strategy is to ensure the best possible connectivity for passengers and businesses, whilst maintaining high standards for safety, fair competition, the environment and social issues. The Commission received in 2016 mandates from the Council to negotiate aviation agreements with a number of third countries on behalf of EU Member States, and has now successfully concluded negotiations with Qatar. The agreement will, for the first time, put in place a single set of rules, for air transport services between the EU and Qatar.

What are the benefits of the EU-Qatar aviation agreement?

All EU Member States have bilateral aviation agreements with Qatar. However, the existing agreements fail to provide a coherent set of rules including robust provisions for fair competition to ensure a level playing field.

Due to these new rules, the agreement will gradually enhance market access to the benefit of consumers, but will also provide new business opportunities for European companies and ensure fair and transparent market conditions based on a clear regulatory framework. It will provide more connections and better prices for passengers. Global connectivity is a driver of trade and tourism and directly contributes to economic growth and job creation.

The agreement will benefit citizens and businesses in different ways:

- More connections and better prices for European passengers and businesses, as well as the highest levels of safety.
- Potential economic benefits of nearly €3 billion over the period 2019-2025, plus the creation of around 2,000 new jobs by 2025. Global connectivity is a driver of trade and tourism and contributes to economic growth and job creation.
- The agreement contains provisions on social matters: both Qatar and EU Member States commit to improving their labour laws and policies to ensure high levels of labour protection in aviation. Labour matters and potential differences will be discussed at an early stage.

I am an EU citizen – what is in it for me?

The EU-Qatar aviation agreement ensures excellent connectivity and will improve prices for passengers. It ensures the highest standards for passengers' safety, fair competition, the environment and air transport workers rights.

How will the agreement benefit the European aviation sector?

The agreement includes provisions to facilitate air transport between the EU and Qatar, including the removal of existing obligations for EU airlines to work through a local sponsor. For a long time, State aid to Qatar's national carrier has been perceived as distorting competition for European carriers. The EU Qatar aviation agreement addresses this concern with provisions on fair competition and transparency to avoid distortions and abuse. The market opening will be done gradually over five years. Experience has shown that negotiating EU level comprehensive aviation agreements with third countries is an effective tool in generating benefits for both parties to the agreements. For example, since the signature of the EU Air Transport agreement with the Western Balkan States, the market has grown by 165%. In the case of Morocco, it has grown by 150%. Since the conclusion of the agreements with US and Canada the combined growth between the EU and these markets has been more than 15 million seats.