



JOINT STATEMENT

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European Aviation: No more delays, the time for action is now!

By Violeta Bulc, EU Commissioner for Transport and Karima Delli, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism.

"2018 is expected to be the busiest year so far in terms of air traffic, with 11 million flights forecast. On top of that the summer holiday season is upon us, which is the busiest period for air travel. The bleak reality is that around 50,000 passengers will face delays - every day - of up to 2 hours in airports across Europe, leading to missed connections and unforeseen costs.¹ Our current air traffic system is struggling to cope with the ever increasing volume of traffic, and other disruptions which contribute to these delays.

The system needs an urgent upgrade. Now is the moment to be bold – we need a more genuine cooperation between national air navigation service providers, and we need to work with Eurocontrol to create a more effective management of the European network. This will improve the efficiency and capacity of our network, which will in turn reduce delays and congestion in our airports, and also help to mitigate the serious environmental impact of aviation.

The EU has been working to move away from a national fragmented approach, towards a harmonised one. The existing EU legal framework governing European airspace (Single European Sky) has led to a better use of air capacity: Safety levels have improved, there is less pollution and also a decrease of fuel consumption of more than 2% per flight. We have also halted the increases in the cost of air traffic management. But this was not sufficient.

That is why the Commission went one step further and proposed a reform of this legal framework (Single European Sky 2+) in order to upgrade the system, but unfortunately this has been on hold for years. This reform would contribute to more efficiency, shorter routes and lower operational and environmental costs. This could generate 36 billion euro in savings over the next 20 years, and deliver up to 11 000 jobs.²

Yes, the EU economy and the aviation sector are growing again and that is great news. Planes are packed, and airports are humming with activity. We now need to ensure that this European success story continues. We are therefore calling on the EU Member States and stakeholders to work with us to help build a modern and efficient air traffic infrastructure in Europe, allowing citizens to travel smoothly and for our economy to remain competitive. Only together can we bring about the changes that the system desperately needs."

¹ Study by Eurocontrol: European Aviation in 2040 – Challenges of Growth

² Study by the European Parliament on 'the cost of non-Europe'

Background: Facts and figures on air traffic delays

Delays in air traffic in the 28 EU Members States, Norway and Switzerland are on the rise again. Eurocontrol forecast that for 2018, capacity and staffing will be worse than 2017. Specific attention will therefore be required on capacity planning, with timely capacity investments and enough flexibility to adapt to the volatility of the demand. The disruptions to date are equivalent to all of 2017. Weather delays to date are 4x what occurred in all of 2017. Our current estimate of delays for this year is 15 million minutes making the delay forecast of 1.35 min/flight.