

ETF position on Slot Waivers

Brussels, 11 January 2021

The European Commission presented a “Slot Relief” [proposal](#) to the European Parliament’s TRAN Committee today. **The ETF believes that the proposal ignores the significant issue of job losses and the social consequences of this pandemic as well as a severe lack of sustainable and long-term job protection.**

The recovery of the aviation industry in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic is of critical importance to the ETF and its members. As we remain in the depths of this crisis, the Commission, workers and employers need to continue to work in close collaboration to help the industry recovery and to protect jobs and working conditions of our industry. This pandemic is not another opportunity to dogmatically cut long-term labour costs as has been the issue in the past. Any sustainable recovery must be reached through a consensus of all stakeholders.

While slots will be a prominent issue in this recovery, this debate on a slot waiver misses the main issue at stake, a lack of support to protect aviation infrastructure, jobs and decent employment. It is our view that such discussions on slots are premature and do not address this significant concern.

The proposal of the European Commission and the position of the airline industry both ignores the significant issue of job losses and the social consequences of this pandemic. In our view, the use or lack of use of slots is a symptom of a much larger problem that the industry is facing and the time and energy of both employers and the Commission would be better spent ensuring sustainable and long-term job protection through individual Member State support and the Next Generation EU programme.

While we welcome the aviation-specific support given by Member States throughout 2020, it has not gone far enough in most cases. Such support must focus on the entire aviation ecosystem, from airlines and its staff to workers and employers in ground handling and other less visible sectors of the industry, which have been ignored when it comes to aviation-specific support, be it via budgetary allocation or via employment and T&C protection.

We recognise that the European Commission’s proposal is likely to increase the amount of traffic and thus protect some jobs in the short-term, but given Eurocontrol’s¹ most recent outlook for recovery being pushed to 2026, it is clear that strategy needs to be sustainable in the long-term and must support workers rights across time and the aviation ecosystem, not just airlines.

¹ <https://www.eurocontrol.int/sites/default/files/2021-01/eurocontrol-think-paper-8-impact-of-covid-19-on-european-aviation-in-2020-and-outlook-2021.pdf>

Therefore, we call on the Commission and employers to consider alternative proposals that focus specifically on the aviation sector's social needs in the long-term, rather than simply increasing the level of traffic in Europe with no social, employment or operational guarantees. Unlike previous proposals on slot regulations, these proposals must involve all partners, particularly social partners such as trade unions and NGOs.

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