



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 24 March 2011

8161/11

AVIATION 67

INFORMATION NOTE

From: UK delegation
To: Council
Subject: Progressing Air Cargo security work
– Information from the United Kingdom delegation

Delegations will find annexed a note from the UK delegation on the above mentioned subject, which will be dealt with under "Any Other Business" at the meeting of the Council (**Transport, Telecommunications and Energy**) on 31 March 2011.

PROGRESSING AIR CARGO SECURITY WORK

1. Following the discovery of two improvised explosive devices concealed within cargo on two aircraft on 29 October 2010, the EU Presidency and the EU Commission decided to set up an ad hoc High Level Working Group to look at ways to strengthen air cargo security. The Group prepared a report and action plan on strengthening air cargo security which was presented to and endorsed by the Council in December 2010.
2. The Presidency asked the Commission and Member States to speedily implement the measures in the Action Plan attached to the report. It invited the Commission to report back to the Transport Council within six months on progress made. The clear timetable of actions recognised the importance of enhancement and harmonisation of the EU rules for cargo security.

IMPORTANCE OF PROGRESS

3. The UK is grateful for, and has supported, the ongoing EU air cargo security working group discussions to think through how an enhanced EU aviation security cargo regime might work. However it is important that swifter progress is made - the development of a longer term solution should not delay a more immediate response. The enhanced regime needs to be proportionate and risk-based, concentrating the greatest effort on the highest risk cargo. It is no longer acceptable to have a regime based on the concept that ‘once something has flown once it is safe’
4. Due to the global nature of aviation and the highly complex and frequently changing nature of cargo and courier routings, the UK considers it important that minimum screening standards for inbound cargo are introduced on a common EU basis. The UK also believes it is vital that our officials urgently discuss and agree a definition for “high risk cargo” and we call upon the Commission to dedicate a working group meeting to this issue.

CONCLUSION

5. The Council has previously agreed that this issue is important and that speedy action is needed. We now need to ensure that we provide the necessary political support to officials and to the Commission in order deliver an enhanced regulatory regime for air cargo security sooner rather than later. If progress is not made, some Member States may need to act individually in order to maintain the confidence of our citizens in the safety and security of international aviation.

6. The UK would welcome an update from the Commission in the Council meeting on 31st March on the work they have undertaken to date. I hope that we will be able to agree on a firm, concrete and co-ordinated programme of measures by the June council.
