



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**AVIATION 171**

**INFORMATION NOTE**

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From: European Commission  
To: Council  
Subject: Single European Sky - Air traffic situation for summer 2011  
- *Information from the Commission*

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Delegations will find annexed an information note from the Commission 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 16 June 2011.

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**Information note from the European Commission****Single European Sky****Air traffic situation for summer 2011**

The Council was informed at its March session of the risk of potentially **high air traffic delays next summer** and of the measures agreed at the Budapest Conference to reduce these delays. A letter was sent in March by Vice-President Kallas to Ministers of Transport as well as to the European Parliament (Chair of the Transport Committee) to raise awareness and seek their support. This issue is for the second time on the agenda of the Transport Council.

The en-route delays expected for summer 2011 for the European Air Traffic Management network, without considering possible industrial actions, severe weather conditions or other exceptional events, amount to:

- an average of 1.7 minute delay per flight;
- 16 million passengers suffering a delay of 30 minutes or more
- a potential minimum cumulated estimated cost of 800 million euro for the air transport industry.

While this forecast would indicate an improvement compared to the forecast for summer 2010 (2.0 minute delay per flight), the risk of deterioration is still high as the experience of the last summer shows when actual delays peaked to very high levels (2.8 minutes per flight) due to unforeseen circumstances mainly related to social unrest. Furthermore a growth of 3.4 % in traffic is expected during 2011. Delays are caused by the lack of 'structural' capacity (77% of air traffic management delays, including shortage of staff and unofficial industrial actions), and by planned or unplanned events (including official strikes, bad weather, system changes or failures). Top ten bottlenecks represent 40% of the total air traffic management delays.

The measures proposed in March consisted in short-term actions to be taken by Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs), the Network Manager nominated by the Commission (Eurocontrol), Member States and the EU. It was proposed that Eurocontrol as future Network Manager would identify, propose and implement **short-term operational and technical** measures, while the Commission would provide **political and where necessary regulatory support**.

The **operational actions** taken so far by Eurocontrol with some ANSPs and States brought successful results, resulting in a total increase of airspace capacity of 12%, and helped containing a further increase of delays. However, in some other States, existing difficulties could not be overcome or new capacity restrictions appeared.

The impending establishment of the Network Manager and the appointment of Eurocontrol to discharge its functions will create the necessary conditions for improving performance.

As a consequence, despite the successful actions by the Network Manager, the forecast at this stage remain at the same level as estimated in March, **1.7 min per flight** (excluding exceptional events or severe weather conditions). It is unlikely at this stage that figures would significantly decrease and a realistic objective is to limit delays at this level and not exceed 1.7 min/flight during the summer (the final average delay at the end of summer 2010 was 2.8 min/flight).

The Commission and Eurocontrol are jointly pursuing efforts to put in place sustainable measures capable of delivering full benefits on the network for summer **2012 and beyond**. Continued growth of traffic and specific events planned (Olympic Games, Football EuroCup) will indeed create an even more challenging context in summer 2012. The implementation of the functional airspace blocks and the performance scheme should contribute to ease the situation.

In the light of the above considerations, the Commission with the support of Eurocontrol calls for prompt action by Member States and their respective air navigation service providers in achieving the required measures both at regulatory and operational levels to ensure a satisfactory performance of Air Traffic Management in summer 2011.