

Introduction

The European aviation industry stands at a crossroads. It is restructuring to face the economic crisis and the growing global competition. The aviation industry is also under pressure to improve its environmental performance. In addition European citizens rightly expect the highest levels of safety and security. Finally, events this year have highlighted the irreplaceable role of aviation, but also the fragmentation of the skies of Europe which hampers the sector's performance.

In the presence of the ICAO Secretary General, Mr Raymond Benjamin, 400 high level representatives of the European aviation community met for two days in Bruges to address these important challenges. The conference was opened by the Belgian State Secretary for Mobility Mr Etienne Schouppe, current President of the Transport Council, and the Vice-President of the European Commission Mr Siim Kallas. The Belgian Prime Minister Mr Yves Leterme addressed the conference.

There was consensus among the participants that a strong European aviation industry is critical to ensure the right to mobility of 500 million European citizens. It is also vital for the success of a strong European economy since it positions Europe as a global hub and crossroads of economic activity, it acts as an engine of economic development for the regions, and it creates jobs. The time is now to work towards developing a smart, sustainable and inclusive aviation strategy.

The participants of the European Aviation Summit in Bruges call for decisive European action in the following areas:

1 Improve competitiveness of the European aviation industry

Europe aims at an efficient, competitive aviation system, offering a network of global connectivity where citizens can safely and securely fly at affordable rates. Therefore the following actions need to be taken:

- Building upon Europe's successful liberalisation strategy to meet the mobility demands for European citizens or global passengers, extend the European Common Aviation Area and offer new market opportunities with like-minded countries based on value added for the European economy.
- Maintain and improve a competitive European aviation industry to create additional employment opportunities in Europe; in that context, avoid additional burdens (e.g. taxes on aviation) affecting European carriers' competitiveness.



- Reform EU rules to foster the competitiveness of European airports and eliminate capacity bottlenecks, so that efficiency of each link of the aviation transport chain is improved to give travellers and companies more value for money.
- Ensure a level playing field in a global market and consider specific instruments, where appropriate.

2 Achieve the Single European Sky

Europe is paying dearly the costs of fragmentation of its skies. The Single European Sky will deliver a seamless, safer, more performing and sustainable air traffic management system, built on the five pillars (regulation, safety, research & development, capacity, human factor).

The Bruges summit confirms the European commitment to the swift implementation of Single European Sky and calls on the national Ministers and on the European Commission to act on the following focal points:

- Set ambitious binding performance targets for air navigation service provision in the key areas of safety, environment, airspace capacity and cost efficiency.
- Establish functional airspace blocks within the agreed deadline of 2012, so that airspace corresponds to operational requirements and the needs of airlines rather than to national borders.
- Enhance civil–military cooperation, so that all airspace users can benefit from the success of the Single European Sky.
- Nominate the central network management function aiming at ensuring cohesion of the European network and of the performance targets, through Eurocontrol
- Put in place innovative financing mechanisms, pooling all possible resources from the public and private sector, to fund the synchronized deployment of new technologies under the SESAR programme

These actions can only deliver if the human factor is given priority

3 Protect European citizens with the highest safety and security standards

The EU is committed to achieving the highest safety and security performance, harmonized across its Member States and continuing to improve over time.

Therefore the Bruges Summit calls upon European decision-makers to take following actions:

In the safety field:

- Deliver a harmonized set of clear and concise rules covering all links in the safety chain, using the total system approach, developed by the European Aviation Safety Agency through an efficient rule-making process in full partnership with national authorities and taking due account of stakeholders' views.
- Enhance transparency, so as to improve safety through a system that is pro-active, evidence-based and that assesses the effectiveness of actions taken to prevent accidents and incidents.
- Promote open reporting and just strengthen the capability to analyse safety information.

- Increase efforts to support third countries facing safety challenges, where the political will exists to take action to achieve the international standards set by ICAO.
- Welcome the Commission's intention to organise a high level European safety conference in January 2011 to discuss the strategy and to raise political awareness on aviation safety

In the security field:

- Pursue one stop security, better use of shared intelligence and targeted controls on those who pose the greatest risk in order to prevent security incidents and facilitate travel.
- Continue improving detection techniques and technologies by supporting research and development and by creating the legal framework to allow testing and certification of equipment.
- Enhance security standards worldwide, working with ICAO, while intensifying cooperation with third countries through capacity building
- Emphasize the importance of aviation security training initiatives and standardization.¹

4 Ensure sustainability of aviation

The participants of the Bruges summit welcome the historic agreement achieved in the last ICAO Assembly of October 2010. This agreement makes aviation the first transport mode, at the global level, committed to environmental goals of increased fuel efficiency and of collective medium term carbon neutral growth. Aviation is the first sector where States, together with industry, have agreed a global environment action plan. Europe is committed to make an effective contribution to this collective effort and to take more ambitious action than others within this framework.

The Bruges Summit therefore confirms the need to pursue a comprehensive approach towards aviation's impact on climate change through:

- Working on new standards;
- Investing in research and technology;
- Improving air traffic management procedures and operational performance;
- Pursuing market-based measures through the inclusion of aviation in the EU's Emissions Trading System from 2012 onwards.

The participants recognise the critical importance of ensuring consistency between national market-based measures and those adopted at EU level, and of avoiding market distortion, including between EU and non-EU competitors, and carbon leakage. Therefore, a proposal was made to establish a working group to enable the EU Council of Transport Ministers to better assess the mechanisms and impact of the European Emission Trading System on the competitiveness of the European Aviation industry

The participants also recognise the value of voluntary industry efforts, such as for example the Airport Carbon Accreditation, to reduce their CO₂ emissions.

¹ The work of EASTI was considered as a good example in this context.