

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 12 April 2011

EU Forum on Transatlantic Aviation Competitiveness confirms strong cooperation between the US and the EU

The EU Forum on Transatlantic Aviation Competitiveness, organised by the European Commission in Washington D.C., brought together a wide range of actors from across Europe and the United States representing government, industry, unions, finance specialists and academics to discuss ways of further deepening transatlantic cooperation. The EU remains a very important partner to the US in terms of aviation, an increasingly competitive sector, with a combined market size that represents 60% of the world aviation traffic. Barriers however remain, which is why the Aviation Forum will continue to foster cooperation between the two partners.

The Forum on Transatlantic Aviation Competitiveness further contributed to the objective of creating a transatlantic Open Aviation Area: a single air transport market between the EU and the US with free flows of investment and no restrictions on air services, including access to the domestic markets of both parties.

European Commission Vice-President Siim Kallas delivered the opening speech, in which he invited participants to work jointly towards a competitive transatlantic environment and ensure increased access to commercial opportunities and global finance. Vice-President Kallas argued that we should use the different tools that the EU and the US have developed such as the EU-US Air Transport Agreement, as amended in 2010, and the EU-US Air Safety Agreement, that will enter into force in May of this year.

Participants of the Forum also viewed a recorded speech delivered by Mr Brian Simpson, Chairman of the European Parliament Transport and Tourism Committee, in which he invited US lawmakers to reinforce their links with the European Parliament on aviation issues, particularly in relation to the need to reform investment rules.

Facts and Figures

According to a 2008 study conducted by Oxford Economics for the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) on the economic and social benefits of air transport, it was estimated that providing air services generated almost 5.5 million direct jobs globally within the air transport industry and contributed USD 408 billion to global GDP.

The EU's contribution was estimated at USD 118 billion, creating 1.5 million direct jobs in the EU, and remains an important partner as:

- European airlines carry about a third of all air passengers worldwide.
- Five of the ten busiest international airports are in Europe.
- The air transport sector generates more than four million indirect jobs in Europe.

Furthermore, the EU-US Air Transport Agreement is forecasted to generate in the medium term 25 million additional passengers, €12 billion benefit, and an extra 80,000 jobs in the US and EU, in a market that already represents 60% of the world traffic.

Next steps

The Aviation Forum will pave the way for the work on the shared goal of reinforcing the competitiveness of EU and US airlines, and, where possible, removing any remaining barriers. No formal conclusions to the discussions were made. However, it is expected that the information exchanged in these informative discussions will help towards the development EU-US cooperation in aviation.

More information:
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air/international_aviation/country_index/united_states_en.htm