

Brussels, 26 August 2009 D(2009) 216991

Opinion

Title

Impact Assessment on: Commission's proposal on better efficiency in the investigation and prevention of civil aviation accidents and incidents

(draft version of 20 July 2009; resubmission)

Lead DG DG TREN

1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion

(A) Context

Directive 94/56/EC and Annex XIII to the Chicago Convention on International Civil aviation contain the obligation to investigate, by an independent body, accidents or serious incidents in civil aviation. Directive 2003/42/EC obliges aviation professionals to report occurrences (errors and potentially risky situations) in order to draw and disseminate safety lessons. This impact assessment accompanies the proposal to modernise the current system for civil aviation investigation and occurrence reporting in the EU to take into account the fact that safety standards are almost exclusively defined at the EU level, and that the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA, created in 2002) is executing certain functions and tasks, including certification, on behalf of the Member States.

(B) Positive aspects

The report has been substantially reworked on the basis of the Board's recommendations. It has re-assessed the policy options and identified an alternative preferred option (a network) that would achieve the policy objectives in a more proportionate and efficient manner than the creation of a European Coordinator as originally proposed. The problem definition identifies more clearly the causes of the inefficiencies of the current civil aviation investigation framework. It demonstrates better the extent to which the problems are linked to poor implementation of the current regulatory framework, and/or to the changes in the single aviation market since the adoption of Directive 94/56/EC.

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(C) Main recommendations for improvements

The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance.

General recommendation: The report has been improved on a number of issues. There remain, however, some areas where further clarification is necessary. The report should provide further detail on the functioning and organisation of the network of safety investigators which is the preferred policy option. It should develop further the analysis of the risks associated with implementation of this option and possibly mitigating measures. It should be more specific about possible administrative burden expected for the Member States (for all options). Finally, it should specify whether the problems identified concern all or only some of the Member States.

(1) Be more specific about the functioning and organisation of the preferred option and about the additional administrative burden expected under the different policy options. In particular, given that the creation of a network will be supported by an annual grant from the Community budget, an ex ante evaluation should be included in this impact assessment or provided separately. Also, given that some of the options imply additional costs for the Member States and National Safety Investigation Authorities (p. 61, 62), the report should provide an approximate scale of these costs, and indicate whether there will be new reporting requirements and possible administrative burdens.

(2) Address further the inefficiencies of the current civil aviation investigation framework, and the reasons for the unsatisfactory implementation of the current directives. As recommended in the previous IAB opinion, the report needs to distinguish between the general problems concerning the Community and those related to specific Member States. While the problem definition section makes clear that the problems identified are to a large extent linked to the structural changes in the internal civil aviation market, it should clarify whether the problem of tensions between safety investigations and other judicial proceedings and the problem of weakness of implementation of safety recommendations concern all or only some of the Member States.

(D) Procedure and presentation

The different views expressed by the stakeholders on the proposed options are presented more clearly in the resubmitted report. The length of the report should be considerably shortened to bring it closer to the recommended maximum of 30 pages. Given that the impact assessment has been substantially reworked, the report should specify whether the inter-service steering group has been consulted on the revisions that have been made.

2) IAB scrutiny process

Reference number	2009/TREN/004 (catalogue)
Author DG	DG TREN
External expertise used	No
Date of Board Meeting	Written procedure
Date of adoption of Opinion	26 August 2009
	The present opinion concerns a resubmitted draft IA report. The first opinion was issued on 30 June 2009.