

Opinion on slot allocation and airport scheduling

(6 November 1990)

Group exemption

A Commission Regulation on group exemptions covering slot allocation at airports should in no way prejudice the outcome of the discussion within the Council on a possible Community 'code of conduct' for slot allocation.

The Joint Committee sees no reason for changing the present conditions for granting group exemptions covering slot allocation at airports. It therefore unanimously recommends that the present group exemption expiring in January 1991 be renewed unchanged.

Council Regulation (EEC) No 3976/87, the validity of which has been extended by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2344/90 until the end of 1992, explicitly recognizes that historical precedence at airports, i.e. the system of 'grandfather rights' is the foundation of slot allocation and should be preserved as it provides the stability required for planning airline schedules.

The Commission's proposed new group exemption (OJ C 90, Notice 211/02) implementing Regulation in its Article 4 would introduce conditions conflicting with the clear policy intentions of the Council.

Code of conduct

The Joint Committee requires that any further development by the Commission of its

draft proposals for a code of conduct be undertaken in a time scale compatible with the subject's importance. The Joint Committee respectfully requests that it be given an adequate opportunity to consider and deliver an opinion on the Commission's draft proposals for a code of conduct.

Such a code of conduct should exclusively address the required transparency criteria for slot allocation and scheduling procedures by the industry.

The Joint Committee calls upon the European Commission, whilst recognizing regional and consumer interests, to create conditions favourable to the optimum use of existing airport capacity and the creation of adequate capacity in the future.

The Joint Committee also urges the European Commission to ensure that airports are considered as partners with airlines in the slot allocation process.

New entrants

As to the question of 'new entrants', to which the Commission intends to give preferential treatment, this is a central issue of air transport policy for which the Council has announced the adoption of Community rules by 1 July 1992.

