

Citizens' summary

Modernising air traffic management (Single European Sky update)

The European Commission is proposing to update EU rules on air traffic management. Specifically, the update will improve:

- **performance of air traffic management** (such as air traffic control and weather-forecasting)
- **oversight of air navigation services**
- **technical interoperability of systems** (whilst maintaining current safety levels)
- **customer-focus** of air-navigation service providers

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

- If no action is taken, the increase in traffic will cause major delays.
- The European system is still much less efficient than the US one - and it is passengers and freight customers who pay the bill.
- The technology used for air traffic control is outdated – decades old.
- There is still no independent oversight of air-navigation service providers in some EU countries.
- Rules and regulations are poorly coordinated and many EU rules have been poorly implemented.

WHAT EXACTLY WOULD CHANGE?

Performance

- More stringent performance targets for air navigation services
- More cooperation between national air navigation services (improved system of "functional airspace blocks") and a stronger role for the central network manager
- Some monopoly services would be opened up to competition.

Oversight

- National authorities would be required to be fully independent of the providers they oversee.

Rules on safety and interoperability:

- The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) would be made responsible for coordinating the drafting of all technical rules to ensure the rules in various sectors serve the same goals and lead to improved interoperability of systems.

Customer focus:

- The air-navigation service providers would have to include the airspace users (the airlines, military and general aviation) – in consultation and decision-making.

WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

- **Passengers** – lower costs for airlines and more direct routes would help keep ticket prices down.
- **Airlines** – more cost-effective air-navigation services providers could help many airlines become profitable again.
- **The environment** – shorter routes and fewer delays would mean lower greenhouse-gas emissions.
- **EU economy** – a well-functioning air transport system is vital for economic growth.

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

- Only joint EU action can make Europe's air traffic management systems more coherent. The current fragmentation imposes a major cost in an international business such as air transport.
- The Single European Sky system has proved its worth, bringing many benefits since 2004.

WHEN ARE THE PROPOSALS LIKELY TO COME INTO EFFECT?

Late 2014