

Overview

SLOTS

European airlines require continued access to congested airports within the European Union at an affordable price. The economic and social requirement to link Europe's regions with major airports must not be jeopardised by an objective to limit the number of overall passengers using a congested airport. There is a dire shortage of capacity at Europe's congested airports. Changing the Regulation governing slots at these airports does not increase capacity; this merely shifts the types of airlines/aircraft which are able to use the airport.

On 1 December 2011 the EC released its Airport Package which contains new proposals on slots, noise and ground handling. While the proposals on slots contain some positive changes, they fail to tackle the underlying problem of lack of capacity at European airports. The Commission itself cannot compel States to implement new capacity at airports but it does have the ability to encourage and facilitate capacity development at an EU level and such initiatives would certainly be supported by the industry.

While ERA supports the need for an EU Regulation on slot allocation, any further amendment to the current Regulation must take account of the needs of communities served by airlines which operate smaller aircraft to meet demand on routes with small passenger markets.

Following the release of the EC's proposed amendments to the slot allocation Regulation, ERA and the European Business Aviation Association commissioned an independent study by internationally renowned consultants Mott MacDonald, to analyse the true impact of the EC's new proposals on European air transport and the business and communities they serve.

The study concluded that any gains from changes in slot allocation rules are likely to benefit non-EU economies, would lead to job losses throughout Europe and be detrimental to Europe's air service connectivity, its economic and social well-being; particularly within the peripheral often disadvantaged regions of Europe.

