


Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2008/2136(INI)
Procedure completed	
Developing a common aviation area with Israel	
Subject	
3.20.01 Air transport and air freight	
3.20.01.01 Air safety	
6.40.05.06 Relations with the countries of the Middle East	
6.40.15 European neighbourhood policy	
Geographical area	
Israel	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		20/11/2007
	Committee for opinion	NI ROMAGNOLI Luca	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs	Rapporteur for opinion	
		The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Energy and Transport	TAJANI Antonio	

Key events			
08/11/2007	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2007)0691	Summary
22/05/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/02/2009	Vote in committee		Summary
23/02/2009	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0090/2009	
12/03/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
12/03/2009	Decision by Parliament	T6-0127/2009	Summary
12/03/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2008/2136(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54; Rules of Procedure EP 54-p4
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TRAN/6/62896

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2007)0691	09/11/2007	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE416.450	01/12/2008	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE418.432	27/01/2009	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0090/2009	23/02/2009	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0127/2009	12/03/2009	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2009)3244	06/10/2009	EC	

Developing a common aviation area with Israel

In 2005 the Commission prepared a Communication on 'Developing an agenda for the Community's external aviation policy', the purpose of which is to forge aviation links with the EU's partners along its southern and eastern flank. The main objective of the policy is to share the same market rules through a 'Common Aviation Area'.

The specific purpose of this Communication is to seek Council approval for a comprehensive agreement on a Common Aviation Area with Israel that combines market opening and regulatory cooperation with improved convergence in priority areas such as safety, security, environmental protection and the application of state aid/competition rules.

The EU is the largest trading partner of Israel, which in turn is one of the EU's biggest trading partners in the Euromed area, with a total trade amounting to almost EUR 23 billion in 2005. As far as aviation is concerned, the EU and Israeli markets are closely linked. The capacity provided in the total EU-Israel market is evenly split between Community and Israeli air carriers – due in large part to the bilateral air services agreements between the Member States and Israel.

The report points to a number of benefits in the creation of a Common Aviation Area with Israel. For example, until now, the EU Member States have negotiated restrictive bilateral air service agreements with Israel resulting in a reduced level of market opening and strict market conditions for operators. The current system of bilateral air service agreements distorts patterns of traffic and may disadvantage several Community air carriers as well as consumers in some Member States. A Community level aviation agreement, on the other hand, would establish a level playing field for all Community air carriers and allow passengers in all Member States to benefit from similar conditions and increased traffic between the EU and Israel.

The Common Aviation Agreement with Israel will bring about a number of economic benefits. Market openings should offer EU and Israeli passengers significant improvements. The number of direct connections between the EU and Israel as well as the overall number of flights will increase trade and tourism flows significantly. An important share of the economic benefits is expected to be reaped by the European airline industry and the wider European economy. Further, the Common Aviation Area will help create substantial new market opportunities for those EU air carriers that would like to begin air operations with Israel but who, currently, do not have the right to do so. Economies of scale will also be realised by integrating Israeli carriers into existing alliances with Community air carriers.

For its part, Israel has declared its readiness to begin negotiations on the development of a Common Aviation Area with the EU. This commitment highlights Israel's ability and capacity to harmonise aviation standards with those of the EU, thereby establishing a solid legal framework for aviation relations. Once approved the agreement will help establish an ambitious framework that integrates wider aviation issues such as regulatory co-operation with cooperation on aviation safety, security, air traffic management, RT&D as well as industrial cooperation.

In light of the above, the Commission proposes that the Council authorise the Commission to begin negotiations with Israel as soon as possible. The Commission will work closely together with the Member States and all relevant stakeholders to further develop and achieve the objectives set out in the proposed Council Decision.

Developing a common aviation area with Israel

The Committee on Transport and Tourism Luca ROMAGNOLI (NI, IT) on developing a Common Aviation Area with Israel in response to the Commission Communication on the subject. It recalls that Israel is the most important aviation market in the Middle East with a strong growth potential, and that it has a strategic position as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East and towards regions which are further away.

The committee welcomes the commencement of the negotiations with Israel on a comprehensive air transport agreement. It stresses the importance of the agreement in terms of creating the conditions for extending the Common Aviation Area. Members consider that the agreement:

- should not limit the level of market access already achieved in the existing bilateral agreements;
- should also be balanced in terms of market access. Furthermore market opening needs to be phased, reciprocal and sustainable;
- should provide for stringent air safety and security rules.

Members emphasise that the opening-up of markets must always follow regulatory convergence with regard to safety, security, environmental, State aid and competition law aspects, and also the employment rights of the workers and that the degree of liberalisation has to be linked to the degree to which a level playing field is achieved in these areas.

They recognise that for long and medium haul air routes, the aviation sector is the fastest way to connect countries, places and people and will continue to be the most attractive means of transport in terms of speed and cost in the future. They also recognise the important contribution of

the aviation sector in creating work, both directly and indirectly, particularly linking places of the world where no other competitive means of transport is now available. Nonetheless they encourage the use and development of inter-modality and other means of transport.

The aviation sector has certain negative environmental effects, in particular as a source of noise and as a significant contributor to pollutant emissions. Members therefore consider it essential that the agreement allows for the possibility to take action within the EU with respect to environmental issues in order to mitigate the impact of aviation on water, air quality and noise levels.

With regard to the negotiations themselves, Members stressed that these should be carried out in close cooperation with the Member States, given that they have the necessary expertise and experience to assist with such negotiations. The Commission is called upon to ensure that the Parliament and all relevant stakeholders are fully informed and consulted throughout the negotiations.

Developing a common aviation area with Israel

The European Parliament adopted, by 455 votes to 62 with 54 abstentions, a resolution on developing a Common Aviation Area with Israel in response to the Commission Communication on the subject.

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