EU TO LAUNCH NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHINA AND JAPAN FOR NEW SAFETY AGREEMENTS

News / Airlines

Just three months after its adoption by the European Commission, the Aviation Strategy is starting to deliver its first results. The Council has yesterday authorised the European Commission to open negotiations with China and Japan in view of concluding Bilateral Air Safety Agreements (BASA). Such agreements enhance air safety worldwide and contribute to the global competitiveness of the European aviation industry by cutting red-tape and facilitating exports.

EU Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc said: “In January I told the Aviation Summit that 2016 is the time for delivery of the Aviation Strategy. I am delighted that it is starting to pay off so early. The new Bilateral Air Safety Agreements we are pursuing will offer European companies new business opportunities in China and Japan, two key aeronautical nations. More trade means more growth and jobs in Europe, a priority of President Juncker. And yet these agreements are only one pillar of the ambitious external aviation policy we put forward as part of the new Strategy. In 2016,

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we will also seek to negotiate comprehensive aviation agreements with several key partners – including China – in order to improve Europe's global connectivity."

The EU has already successfully concluded bilateral aviation safety agreements with the United States, Brazil, and Canada. In 2016, Commissioner Bulc will travel to China and Japan to discuss inter alia the BASAs.

Background

Aviation is a strong driver of economic growth, jobs, trade and mobility for the European Union. It plays a crucial role in the EU economy and reinforces its global leadership position. The EU aviation sector directly employs between 1.4 million and 2 million people and overall supports between 4.8 million and to 5.5 million jobs. The direct contribution of aviation to EU GDP is €110 billion, while the overall impact, including tourism, is as large as €510 billion.

Bilateral aviation safety agreements (BASA) are signed between the EU and third countries in order to enable cooperation in the aviation safety domain, including certification, testing and maintenance of aeronautical components, air operations, flight crew licensing, air traffic management and airports. They remove the duplication of oversight activities and support mutual safety recognition between the EU and third countries. This reduces the transaction cost of exporting aircraft, while ensuring high levels of safety in partner countries and helping to harmonise product standards worldwide.

As part of the Aviation Strategy adopted on 7 December 2015, the European Commission "recommended that the EU negotiates further bilateral aviation safety agreements with important aeronautical manufacturing nations such as China and Japan". The 28 EU Member States have now authorised the Commission to do so on behalf of the entire European Union. Negotiations will start shortly. The Commission will be supported by the European Aviation Safety Agency, which is recognised throughout the world as the EU's aviation safety and aircraft certification body.

The Asia Pacific region will account for around 40% of the world air traffic in 20 years and China is one of the fastest growing aviation markets in the world. Since 2013, the EU and China have significantly enhanced their aviation relations – a development best illustrated by the newly launched aviation partnership project. As part of the Aviation Strategy, the Commission also proposes to negotiate an EU-wide "comprehensive aviation agreement" with China. This will not only improve market access, but also provide new business opportunities for European companies and ensure fair and transparent market conditions based on a clear regulatory framework.

More than 7.2 million passengers travel annually between the EU and China, making of China the 11th largest extra-EU market. With around 5 million annual passengers Japan is the 16th largest extra-EU market.

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