

Aviation emissions – Towards a global approach

Carbon emissions from aviation have grown rapidly, and are expected to keep growing. Since 2012, the EU emissions trading system (ETS) applies to flights to and from airports in the European Economic Area (EEA). Meanwhile, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has been developing a global market-based measure (GMBM) to offset post-2020 emissions growth in international aviation. In view of these international efforts, the EU exempted flights to and from airports outside the EEA from ETS obligations until 2016. The European Commission has proposed a regulation to prolong the exemption and prepare for the implementation of the GMBM. Parliament is due to vote on the proposal during its December plenary session.

Background

Aviation accounts for approximately 2.1 % of global CO₂ emissions – roughly equivalent to Germany's total emissions. International flights account for around 1.3 % of emissions. With the anticipated growth in air traffic, emissions in 2050 are expected to be seven to ten times higher than 1990 levels, according to [ICAO projections](#). In the EU, direct CO₂ emissions from aviation account for about 3 % of total emissions.

In October 2016, the ICAO reached an [agreement](#) on a GMBM to address international aviation emissions. It foresees that CO₂ emissions exceeding 2020 levels will have to be offset by investment in green projects and programmes. This Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation ([CORSIA](#)) will start with the collection of emissions data from 2019, followed by a pilot phase in 2021 and a voluntary first phase in 2024. It will become compulsory from 2027. Parliament's [resolution of 16 February 2017](#) welcomes the ICAO agreement and the commitment of 65 countries to participate voluntarily in the pilot and first phases.

European Commission proposal

CO₂ emissions from all flights to and from airports in the EEA have been included in the ETS since 2012. Although this would include flights between an airport within the EEA and an airport outside it (extra-EEA flights), the application of the ETS to such flights was temporarily suspended, until the end of 2016, to allow for the development of global measures by ICAO, and in order to avoid trade conflicts. In February 2017, the European Commission [proposed](#) a regulation to prolong the derogation for extra-EEA flights, gradually reduce the number of aviation allowances from 2021 onwards, and prepare for the implementation of the GMBM.

European Parliament position

On 11 July 2017, Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) adopted its [report](#) on the proposal. A trilogue [agreement](#), reached on 18 October 2017, would prolong the derogation for extra-EEA flights until 31 December 2023, when the first phase of CORSIA will begin. It provides for a review aimed at implementing the GMBM in the EU, particularly in the ETS, once all ICAO decisions have been taken. Subject to this review, the linear reduction factor as set out in the revised [ETS Directive](#) (2.2 % per year) would apply to the aviation sector from 2021. In addition, the text contains 'Brexit-proofing' [provisions](#) to preserve the integrity of the ETS if a Member State ceases to participate in it. The Council endorsed the agreement on 27 October 2017 and the ENVI Committee approved it on 6 November 2017. The vote on the agreed text is expected to take place during the December 2017 plenary session, enabling formal adoption by the Council.

First-reading report: [2017/0017\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: ENVI; Rapporteur: Julie Girling (ECR, United Kingdom). For further information, see our '[EU Legislation in progress](#)' briefing.

