EUROPEAN AVIATION CAN STILL BE PROFITABLE - EESC CALLS FOR INVESTMENT, INTEGRATION & SOCIAL DIALOGUE

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The overarching goal of the EU Aviation Strategy should be to create a climate which encourages European investors to invest in the aviation sector, according to the EESC – the EU institution representing civil society.

In its opinion entitled Aviation Package I, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) calls for European investment to follow that of other governments across the globe which strategically invest in their aviation industries. Currently, the sector is facing severe competition from international non-EU competitors and the European market is highly attractive for airlines and manufacturers from non-EU countries.

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Aviation – a profitable business

“We have to convince European investors that aviation can still be a profitable business”, said Jacek P. Krawczyk, the EESC rapporteur and President of its Employers’ Group. “European aviation must be pro-active and not reactive when competing with global players. If others are willing to benefit from the large European market, they should fulfil European standards in safety, environmental protection, labour law or state aid. This will guarantee a level playing field and fair competition for everyone”.

The European Commission’s Aviation Strategy, adopted in December 2015, has given rise to discussions within the European Union, as well as internationally, about the policy which the EU should pursue in air transport. The EESC praises the Commission’s initiative as ‘excellent news’, as it places aviation and its crucially important role for employment and growth in Europe, on the political radar. In the EESC opinion, the leading political role of the Commission is a vital prerequisite for the success of the strategy.

The EESC’s position

According to the interests represented in the EESC, such as employers, workers, consumers and others, the Strategy will only succeed with wide-ranging stakeholders’ support. The role of Member States, but also of other parts of the aviation value network needs to be further addressed in the implementation of the strategy.

It will be also vital to tackle constraints on capacity in the air and on the ground and promote innovation. Internationally, a fair level playing field is fundamentally important to secure fair and sustainable competition in the interests of consumers.

The EESC is adamant that progress will be closely linked to an open, fair and frank social dialogue. The social partners must be involved in implementing this ambitious program to secure jobs and provide for economic growth in Europe. The EESC, through its members’ work and their networks, is ideally positioned to provide the European Commission with the practical advice and political support it will need to secure a buy-in from all stakeholders.

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