EUROPEAN COMMISSION ADOPTS PROPOSAL FOR AVIATION EMISSIONS TRADING SYSTEM

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The European Commission (EC) has made a proposal for the revision of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) prolonging the existing temporary limited scope of the scheme that applies to flights within the European Economic Area (EEA) only.

No new requirements will therefore be introduced for flights into and out of the EEA until 2021 when ICAO's global scheme (CORSIA) will be introduced.

ERA is seeking assurances that European operators will not end up with two schemes for flights within the EEA post 2021.

ERA is also calling for a renewed focus on delivering major infrastructure projects such as the Single European Sky that have greater potential to reduce aviation's CO2 emissions than economic instruments.

The European Regions Airline Association* (ERA) has consistently argued that the current reduced scope of the EU ETS has limited environmental effectiveness but imposes considerable administrative burdens on many ERA members, and it would therefore make sense to suspend the scheme ahead of CORSIA coming into force. Nonetheless, this EC proposal will bring clarity for operators inside and outside the EEA. We welcome the commitment by the EC to a further review of the EU ETS prior to CORSIA coming into force. Without such a review, there is a considerable

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risk of a dual scheme post 2021.

Economic instruments such as the EU ETS are only one means of reducing aviation's CO2 impact. Improvements in technology, infrastructure (air traffic management) and operational measures have considerable potential to reduce CO2 emissions. The aviation industry has committed to improvements in all of these areas, but EU states now need to refocus on delivering European projects that have huge potential to reduce aviation's emissions.

Simon McNamara, ERA's Director General, says: "Our members now have clarity on what is expected, but we would like to see a further commitment that ultimately the EU ETS will be replaced by CORSIA. As an industry we have already committed to addressing our climate impact and we are investing in technology and making operational improvements every day. It is time for EU states to make the same commitment and put a renewed effort into delivering major infrastructure projects such as the Single European Sky that have been gaining little headway recently. Arguably, these projects have much more potential to reduce aviation's CO2 emissions and improve flight efficiency than economic instruments such as the EU ETS."

The EC's proposal now has to be ratified by the European Council and the European Parliament in order to be formally adopted.

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