

Antwerp Declaration

on taxes in the aviation sector

Aviation is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Some argue that aviation's share of overall greenhouse gas emissions is "only" about three percent¹. But compared to the aviation sectors' share of GVA of approximately half a percent² the impact on climate change is very significant.

In the North Western part of Europe, aviation's share in national greenhouse gas emissions exceeds 10 %.

The increase of greenhouse gas emissions in the aviation sector is enormous. Compared to 1990, emissions have increased by about 100 %.³ This contrasts dramatically with the Kyoto reduction target of 8 %, or the EU target to cut emissions by 30% by 2020. If Europeans will fly as often and as easily as happens these days in Western Europe, the EU ambitions to tackle climate change cannot be reached.⁴

Aviation is also a major cause of noise and pollution. Millions of people across Europe suffer from aircraft noise. Night flights are a particular problem.

The fact is that the growth of aviation is being fuelled by the lack of taxes on fuel and tickets. This contradicts EU environmental and transport policies. It is therefore time to start impose VAT (ticket taxes) on air travel and taxes on kerosene (fuel tax). There is no sign of anything happening on this because of a lack of coordination in Europe and internationally. But waiting is not an option.

We are therefore are calling on European governments to:

- follow the example set by the UK, France, Norway and the Netherlands by implementing a ticket tax (known as Air Passenger Duty in the UK). This tax should in due time be raised to a level comparable to the normal VAT level.
- to form a group of countries that taxes fuel used on domestic flights and flights between these countries. Eventually, we would like to see a fuel tax on all flights operating within Europe.

These steps should be taken simultaneously with an active Kyoto policy that enforces caps on aviation's CO₂ emissions. It is not enough to simply rely on incorporating the aviation sector into the European Emissions Trading System. This ETS will still allow a significant amount of growth. Emissions will continue to rise and noise will remain a serious problem.

¹ See COM(2005) 459.

² Eurostat, Statistics in Focus 37/2005: The Air Transport Sector in the European Union.

³ This figure results from the well-known and safe 86 % (1990-2004) plus a figure that is based on the average increase of the years 2003/2004 (7.5 % p.a.) (see EEA Technical Report 6/2006; Eurostat News Release 11/2007).

⁴ Tyndal 2005, Growth Scenarios for EU and UK aviation – contradictions with climate policies