

CIVIL AVIATION

Workers' representatives	European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) (1999) http://www.itfglobal.org/etf/index.cfm
	European Cockpit Association (ECA) (1991) http://www.eurocockpit.be
Employers' representatives	Airport Council International (ACI-Europe) (1991) http://www.aci-europe.org/
	Association of European Airlines (AEA) (1952) http://www.aea.be
	Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) (1996) http://www.canso.org
	European Regions Airline Association (ERAA) (1980) http://www.eraa.org
	International Air Carrier Association (IACA) (1971) http://www.iaca.be
	International Aviation Handlers' Association (IAHA) http://www.iaha.info/home/index.php

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (SSDC)

Informal working group:	1990
SSDC:	2000
Internal Rules:	10 June 2003
Work Programme:	2005-2006-2007-2008-2009

[General overview of sector](#)

[Participants and challenges](#)

[Outcomes](#)

Joint texts

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SECTOR

The European civil aviation sector has undergone significant expansion as a result of EU liberalisation and deregulation policies since the late 1980s. This sector accounted for 8.8% of all passenger journeys within the Union in 2007. Since 2005 it has been the second most heavily used means of transport after private cars, coming ahead of buses, coaches and railways.

In 2006 the European air transport sector was made up of 3,450 companies, generating a total turnover of around €120 billion (source: DG TREN, *EU energy and transport in figures*, Statistical Pocket Book 2009). The EU constitutes a significant share of the global market: 19% of all [aircraft movements](#) originated in one of the 27 EU countries in 2007. Moreover, 17 of the top 50 scheduled airlines (“full-service network carriers” – FSNC) were European. In terms of size, however, the North American airlines are bigger than their European counterparts, only three of which are ranked among the top ten global airlines (Air France - KLM, Lufthansa and British Airways). The low-cost carriers, for their part, account for 28% of the seats on offer in the EU. In 2008 there were five European airports among the world’s top twenty (as opposed to 9 in the US and 6 in Asia): London Heathrow, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Frankfurt/Main, Madrid Barajas and Amsterdam Schiphol. Between 1995 and 2007, aviation was the fastest-growing means of transport in terms of passenger numbers (+70.4% over that period, i.e. +4.5% per year on average). What is more, approximately 0.1% of domestic and intra-EU freight (in tkm) and 0.7% of EU foreign trade by weight (21.8% by value) were carried by air in 2007.

In spite of this rapid growth, the sector has had to contend with various difficulties over recent years: the terror attacks of 11 September 2001, the financial and economic crisis of 2008-2009, and the eruption of the Icelandic volcano in 2010.

- The terror attacks of 11 September 2001 caused air traffic to plummet for about two years. The financial difficulties experienced by the sector’s main players led to a [restructuring](#) of the major traditional airlines.
- Since 2008, civil aviation has had to cope with a sharp rise in oil prices dating from the summer of 2008, followed by the financial crisis and then the ensuing recession. The airlines have reacted by postponing investments and scaling back capacity. A steady growth since 2002 in the number of destinations served has now come to an end. The low-cost carriers have improved their market position, as have the three main global airline alliances (Star Alliance, Skyteam and Oneworld), to the detriment of unaffiliated carriers.
- Finally, in March 2010, there came the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjöll, which sparked a further crisis in air transport by totally closing northern Europe’s skies for several days.

Concerning employment, DG TREN reports that in 2006 there were approximately 408,000 jobs in the sector in the EU-27. Employment in the sector increased significantly in the second half of the 1990s, before contracting just after the turn of the millennium for the reasons given above. However, the jobs trend differs from one market segment to another: during the period 1997-2001 employment grew among the budget airlines and in the top five national markets, while it declined in the other

EU-15 Member States and seems to have remained stable overall among the FSNC airlines, in air traffic and in airports.

Even though liberalisation seems not to have brought about any significant reduction in the overall number of jobs (ECORYS), many of the former national flag carriers have been restructured with a view to cutting costs. This is one explanation for the relatively high level of [conflict](#) in the sector in certain countries. Pressure on pay in the sector has been mounting, exacerbated by a rise in atypical employment (particularly at the budget airlines) and variable pay schemes. This situation is giving particular cause for concern in the case of ground-handling services. Over and above the issue of trade union representation at the low-cost carriers (especially Ryanair), we are currently witnessing the emergence of “multi-base airlines”: this raises important questions about the labour legislation applying to employees of these airlines and collective bargaining in the sector.

There are many issues of common concern to the civil aviation sector in Europe. Over the past 20 years the sector has undergone a radical transformation, largely attributable to completion of the single market in aviation. Until the late 1980s the air transport market was governed by national regulations, organised around national flag carriers, and state-owned airports. From 1987 onwards the Community pursued a vigorous policy of liberalising and Europeanising the sector by means of three successive legislative “packages”. The first two sets of measures, adopted in 1987 and 1990, were aimed mainly at easing national regulations on fares and capacity. The second also liberalised traffic between an airline’s country of origin and another EU country. The third package, in January 1993, introduced freedom to offer services within the European Union and, as from April 1997, “cabotage” freedom, i.e. the right of an airline based in one EU Member State to operate between two or more points in another Member State. It furthermore harmonised the conditions for issuing operating licences to EU air carriers and ensured full pricing freedom. In 2008 the texts comprising the third package of measures were simplified and updated in a [single regulation](#).

This policy was probably one of the reasons for the rapid expansion in the air transport market over the past 20 years (new air routes up by 170% between 1993 and 2007). It also facilitated the start-up of low-cost carriers, while leading to tougher competition among “traditional” airlines. The sector has seen some high-profile mergers, the largest of all being that between Air France and KLM.

Other European issues include safety and security in Community air transport, passenger taxes, efforts to make air transport more eco-friendly, ease of access to airport services, measures connected with the [Single European Sky](#) initiative, and cooperation with third countries (e.g. the signing of an agreement with the United States in 2007 abolishing all restrictions on flights between the US and the EU). The “standardisation” of international aviation policies is likely in the long run to open up the sector to cross-border mergers, multinational companies and [global competition](#).

PARTICIPANTS AND CHALLENGES

Civil aviation is one of the sectors where the social partners' representative bodies are the most fragmented. The workers are represented by the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and, for cabin crew, by the ECA (European Cockpit Association). The employers' organisations sitting on the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee are ACI-Europe, the European region of ACI (Airport Council International); the AEA (Association of European Airlines), representing the major carriers; CANSO (the Civil Air Navigation Service Organisation) for the air traffic controllers; the ERAA (European Regions Airline Association); the IACA (International Air Carrier Association) which represents the leisure carriers; and the IAHA (International Aviation Handlers Association) which represents the independent ground-handling companies.

Although the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee was set up in 2000, social dialogue in the sector dates back to the establishment of a joint committee in 1990, at a time when similar committees were formed in three other sectors facing a liberalisation or deregulation process. Since then, social dialogue in civil aviation has resulted in the production of a large number of joint texts, the vast majority of which are joint opinions geared to conveying the social partners' points of view on sectoral policies pursued by the European institutions, particularly in the light of gradual liberalisation in the sector. These joint opinions relate to slot allocation, flight time, mutual recognition of licences, staff training, and so on.

The issue of working time also cropped up in the early 1990s, as the air transport sector was one of the sectors excluded from the [1993 "working time" directive](#). The social partners agreed in 1994 that the provisions of the directive must apply to ground staff, who at that time made up about 80% of the entire workforce (according to the Commission's White Paper on the sectors excluded from the directive). For cabin crew, on the other hand, the situation is more complicated. Not until 2000 did the social partners reach a "European agreement on the organisation of working time of mobile staff in civil aviation". This agreement was then implemented by a [Council decision](#), which lays down maximum annual limits for flight times (900 hours per year) and for total working time (2,000 hours), as well as minimum numbers of monthly and annual rest days. A long-delayed renegotiation of the agreement is now under way.

Another major issue in the sector is the introduction of [functional airspace blocks](#) (FABs). For the record, the [Single European Sky](#) measures are designed to reorganise traffic circuits in European airspace by introducing common technical and procedural rules, promoting the development of a harmonised European air traffic management system and reorganising airspace into "functional airspace blocks" irrespective of national borders. The purpose of FABs is to make the European air navigation network operate more efficiently through joint regulation of air traffic. The social partners have tackled this issue within their social dialogue, giving rise to the adoption of several joint documents on the topic.

They have in addition turned their attention to aviation safety from a business culture perspective. The idea of fostering a “just culture” led to the drawing up of a declaration in 2007 and a recommendation in 2009 (the “Charter for just culture in aviation: European social partners’ charter for continuous improvement in aviation safety”). The social partners’ approach starts from the premise that public safety when flying is not served by punishing or prosecuting those who wish to disclose incidents they have witnessed or mistakes they have committed themselves. Reporting is vital to improving aviation safety by putting preventive measures in place. Thus the Charter lays down guidelines for companies to help them put in place a “confidential non-punitive safety reporting culture”. Disciplinary action should be contemplated only in cases of reckless action or the consumption of psychoactive substances. The Charter sets out the respective responsibilities of staff and management, as well as how to manage incident reports, both at the investigation stage and when considering a course of action once conclusions have been reached.

Two declarations have also been signed on the topics of health and safety promotion for air crew (2008) and training in the ground-handling sector (2005 and 2009). In the latter case the social partners undertake to draw up an autonomous agreement on best training practice within the EU.

Finally, it should be noted that various subjects and activities have regularly featured on the Committee’s work programme without so far having resulted in any joint texts: a skills map for air traffic management engineers, monitoring of sectoral policy and market observation in respect of ground-handling services, revision of the agreement on the organisation of working time of mobile staff, protection of private life and personal data, and “mobile staff and consolidation processes in the sector”.

OUTCOMES

As in many other sectors falling under EU common policies, social dialogue in civil aviation has generated numerous texts which can be regarded as a joint means of lobbying the Community institutions. Around two thirds of the documents adopted are in fact joint opinions relating to European air transport policy.

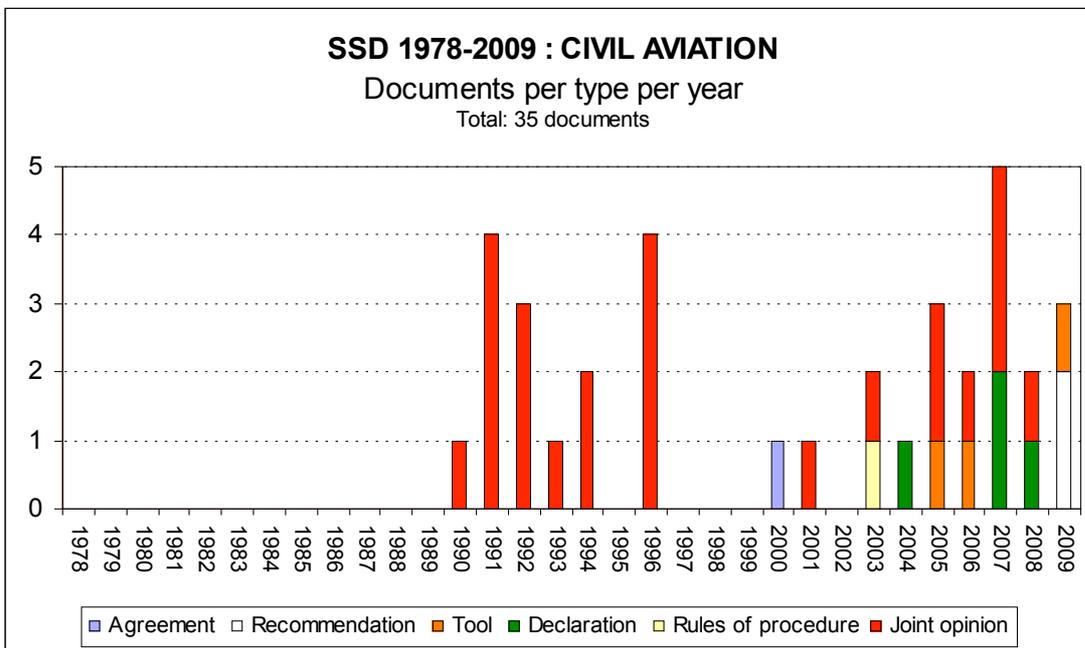
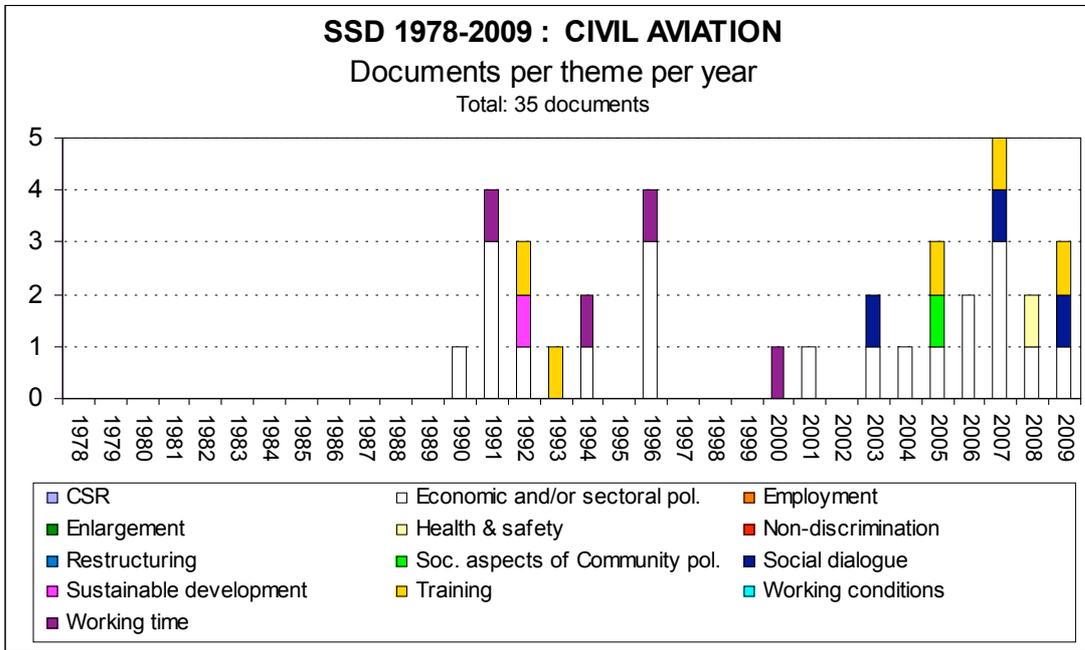
This joint lobbying through the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee seems to be proving effective: following three years of negotiations in a working group, 85% of the social partners' joint demands were incorporated into the compromise reached on 28 January 2004 in the conciliation procedure on the creation of a "Single European Sky" (see Pochet, Dufresne, Degryse & Jadot: "European sectoral social dialogue 1997-2004", ETUI-REHS, OSE, Brussels 2006).

Compared with other sectors such as the railways and electricity, however, the civil aviation social partners appear to be much more narrowly focused and slower to diversify the topics and types of document they adopt. The 2000 agreement on working time, implemented by a Council decision and negotiated "in the shadow of the law", resembles "a life jacket for airlines having no collective agreements" (*op. cit.*).

Even though some working groups have made headway, social dialogue in this sector still seems to lack momentum. The renegotiation of the 2000 agreement which is currently underway seems not to have improved on the initial document, in the view of the trade unions, who have questioned the employers' commitment to social dialogue (at the Committee meeting held on 4 June 2008). One of the main impediments to dialogue would seem to be the fragmentation of interests on the employers' side, both among organisations and among airlines. Further international liberalisation of the sector and the proliferation of multi-base airlines will probably make an already difficult social dialogue even more complex.

JOINT TEXTS

The “civil aviation” sectoral social dialogue has resulted, since 1990, in the adoption of 35 joint texts.



Date	Title	Theme	Type	Addressee
30/06/2009	Joint CANSO-ETF Analysis of the ATM Social Dialogue	Social dialogue	Tool	National organisations
05/05/2009	Joint Declaration on Training and Qualification in the Ground-Handling Sector	Training	Recommendation	European social partners
31/03/2009	Charter for Just Culture in Aviation - European Civil Aviation Social Partners' Charter for Continuous Improvement in Aviation Safety	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Recommendation	Enterprises
17/10/2008	Joint Statement - Workplace Health Promotion for Air Crew	Health and safety	Declaration	European social partners
28/02/2008	Joint CANSO-ETF statement for the second SES package	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
22/11/2007	CANSO-ETF Common Understanding on a Competence and Training Scheme for Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel (ATSEP)	Training	Declaration	European social partners
09/10/2007	Joint statement - European Conference on Functional Airspace Blocks	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
17/07/2007	Guidelines for Consultation arrangements for Functional Airspace Blocks	Social dialogue	Joint opinion	European institutions
20/06/2007	Just Culture Conference - 19-20 June 2007 - Bucharest, Romania - Joint Statement	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Declaration	European social partners
24/01/2007	Joint CANSO-ETF Statement on Functional Airspace Blocks Developments	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
03/11/2006	Report by the Social Dialogue ATM Work Group on the implications of FABs	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Tool	European social partners
23/02/2006	Joint statement on the South East European Functional Airspace Blocks Approach	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
16/06/2005	Canso/ETF statement on the ATCO licence draft directive	Social aspects of Community policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
21/01/2005	ACI EUROPE and ETF Joint Statement on Quality, safety and training in the ground handling sector	Training	Joint opinion	European institutions
01/01/2005	Report on the joint CANSO-ETF conference on functional airspace blocks	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Tool	European social partners
18/09/2004	Joint Statement from the Palermo conference social	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Declaration	European social partners

Date	Title	Theme	Type	Addressee
	partners : key players in the FABs			
10/06/2003	Rules of Procedure	Social dialogue	Rules of procedure	European social partners
14/05/2003	Letter to the Commission - Single European sky	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
12/10/2001	Crisis in air transport - Joint opinion + Communication from the Aviation Industry to the Council of Transport Ministers meeting in Luxembourg on October 16, 2001.	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
22/03/2000	European agreement on the organisation of working time of mobile staff in civil aviation	Working time	Agreement	National organisations
12/09/1996	Discussion on the impact of the impending abolition of duty and tax free sales to intra-EU passengers as determined by Council directives 77/388/EEC and 92/12/EEC	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
25/01/1996	The exclusion of the civil aviation sectors from the terms of Directive 93/104 on the organisation of working time	Working time	Joint opinion	European institutions
25/01/1996	The draft Commission White Paper on air traffic management	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
25/01/1996	The proposed establishment of a single European organisation responsible for aviation safety	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
18/04/1994	Opinion on the Commission's consultation document on ground handling services	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
01/03/1994	Recommendation on working time of ground staff	Working time	Joint opinion	European institutions
15/09/1993	Opinion on the vocational training of ground engineers and maintenance staff	Training	Joint opinion	European institutions
18/12/1992	Statement on dispatchers	Training	Joint opinion	European institutions
26/02/1992	Joint opinion on the third phase of air transport liberalization	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
21/02/1992	Joint opinion on civil aviation and the environment	Sustainable development	Joint opinion	European institutions
20/11/1991	Joint statement on the harmonization of air traffic controllers' licences	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
20/11/1991	Recommendations on the impact of the EC's fiscal harmonization programme on the air transport sector	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions
28/02/1991	Statement on employment in the industry	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	National organisations

Date	Title	Theme	Type	Addressee
15/01/1991	Opinion on a proposal for a Council Regulation on the flight time, the flight duty time and rest periods of flight-deck crews of civil aircraft	Working time	Joint opinion	European institutions
06/11/1990	Opinion on slot allocation and airport scheduling	Economic and/or sectoral policies	Joint opinion	European institutions