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AECMA VIEWS ON EUROPEAN
AIR TRANSPORT POLICY

FOREWORD

The purpose of this paper is to state the views of the European Aerospace Industry, that is to say the industry which manufactures aircraft and the related airborne and ground equipment, on European Air Transport Policy. Such a policy is mainly the responsibility of the European Commission and the National Governments. However many individual or local decisions taken by various parties, and chiefly airports, as part of a global policy or independently, may well have consequences on the development of air transport activities. The airlines are obviously directly concerned by all measures related to Air Transport Policy ; the aerospace industry, as their main supplier, is also greatly concerned by any decision which affects its market.

INTRODUCTION

Although Air Transport started in the 1920s, it really developed after World War II when safe, reliable, efficient aircraft became available. In less than fifty years Air Transport has achieved tremendous progress ; it is now, all over the world, the main means of transportation for long distance passengers, mail and, increasingly, freight. For medium distances it is now able to compete with surface means of transport, not only where speed is important as is the case for business trips, but also for mass transportation where cost is the main factor, such as for leisure travel.

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Today, Air Transport has become a key element of the world economy and life. Besides providing vital and growing services for commerce, communication and leisure, it has also social and political spin-offs by bringing people of different countries and continents closer. By reducing distances, and thus fostering contacts, exchanges and trade between nations, Air Transport has in fact modified completely our perception of the world.

Air Transport has many facets :

- scheduled and non scheduled (charter),
- long haul, medium haul and regional,
- passengers, mail and freight,
- business and private operations.

These various forms of Air Transport are not in competition, they are complementary to one another. They should not be placed artificially in competition for airspace, airport capacity, or for use of the ATC system.

OBJECTIVE

All forms of Air Transport should be able to develop without undue constraints, the only limit being ultimately the law of supply and demand.

For safety reasons, but also for economical, political, diplomatic and historical reasons, Air Transport has to operate in a heavily regulated context.

An administrative authorization based on economical, technical and often political issues, is necessary for the creation or expansion of an airline. A governmental agreement is a prerequisite for the opening of any international service. When finally authorized to operate a network the airline has to comply with many various regulations concerning :

- the aircraft,
- the personnel,
- the operations.

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These economical conditions and technical regulations, whilst necessary in principle, must not hinder the development of Air Transport.

At the beginning, development of Air Transport was difficult economically. Foreseeing all the advantages that it would bring, governments were very supportive. Now the context is different ; Air Transport has become an economically viable activity. However, it has to face many obstacles which jeopardize its development :

- limited airspace, due to military zones,
- Air Traffic Control congestion,
- insufficient airport capacity,
- emission limitations and curfews.

SITUATION IN EUROPE

Air Transport started and developed independently in each European country. Although the European Aerospace Industry acted as a forerunner in European cooperation, for some time it was questioned whether Air Transport was covered by the Rome Treaty. Europeanization of Air Transport has therefore been lagging behind general progress towards building up the European Community even though air transportation represented a major means of contact for the nations which make up Europe.

Since the first Memorandum issued by the European Commission in 1979, the European Authorities have made every effort to catch up. However there were difficulties due basically to long isolated practices and changes had to be brought in progressively. While progress on liberalization was achieved, new and unforeseen obstacles arose, namely air traffic congestion and airport capacity limitations, hampering the development of Air Transport in Europe.

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