



**UNION EUROPÄISCHER INDUSTRIE- UND HANDELSKAMMERN**  
Rhein, Rhône, Donau, Alpen

**UNION EUROPEENNE DES CHAMBRES DE COMMERCE ET D'INDUSTRIE**  
Rhin, Rhône, Danube, Alpes

**UNIE VAN EUROPESE KAMERS VAN KOOPHANDEL**  
Rijn, Rhône, Donau, Alpen

**RESOLUTION: THE FUTURE OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL IN EUROPE**  
**A CALL TO REDUCE AIR TRAFFIC DELAYS**

**The UNION of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry is an association of around 85 Chambers of commerce and industry representing approximately 2.4 million companies from Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. The UNION promotes economic development in its area of interest and concentrates its activities on European Transport Policy of the waterways, land and air as well as other issues that are related to it, such as the rules of the market, regulations, environment and telecommunications.**

The UNION has noted with great concern that the delay situation in Europe has got steadily worse. Last year, air travellers in Europe experienced the worst delay situation on record. According to the statistics of the Association of European Airlines (AEA), every single month in 1999 saw a new all-time high delay rate. The figure of 30% of departures delayed more than 15 minutes, which had been surpassed only once before in June 1989, was beaten five consecutive times from March to July, and again in September 1999.

In the aviation industry it is widely acknowledged that Air Traffic Control (ATC) is the source of a very significant part of total delays and accounts for most of the substantial increase. According to the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG), 75% of these delays arise from a lack of capacity in the en route airspace. Even more significantly, the majority of delays are caused by restrictions in the upper airspace and in the core areas of Europe. It is beyond any doubt that the shortcomings in European ATC cause extreme inconvenience to the travelling public, impose heavy financial penalties on the airlines and give rise to severe capacity problems at airports and high environmental costs.

It is also widely acknowledged that much of the problem stems from the fragmented nature of European ATC – based on independent national monopolies. Neither the European Union (EU) nor the existing coordination body, EUROCONTROL, has any regulatory power vis-à-vis their members regarding ATC. Member States refer to the principle of sovereignty and can only be committed by applying their national implementation procedures according to the laws and regulations of such States. The airline industry must therefore rely on the States' good faith. For many reasons this is not an efficient procedure to meet the rapidly changing demands of the travelling public and the requirements of a fast growing aviation industry.



Union europäischer Industrie- und Handelskammern

Union européenne des chambres de commerce et d'industrie

Unie van Europese Kamers van Koophandel

---

The European Union and EUROCONTROL must be endowed with the appropriate enforcement mechanisms to ensure that decisions, once taken, are carried out in a fully coordinated manner by the States. It is therefore of paramount importance that the European Union and EUROCONTROL are given the necessary regulatory powers and procedures so that EUROCONTROL decisions are directly applicable in Member States and that those States comply effectively and swiftly with EUROCONTROL standards and requirements.

Another problem is that most European States do not have effective plans for providing air traffic capacity to meet growth. There is an urgent need to react to demand and to enhance airspace capacity and reduce bottlenecks in Europe for the benefit of the air transport system as a whole.

There is also the difficulty that providers of air traffic services are monopolies. The provision of Air Traffic Services must therefore be liberalised through commercialisation, privatisation or corporatisation in each of the European States so that these providers have the freedom, within the appropriate regulatory regimes, to become more customer-driven by offering the right quality and quantity of service at the right price. A rewarding system should promote this.

In this context it is also essential to establish a clear separation of responsibilities between ATC service providers and ATC regulators, so as to avoid the conflict of interest which arises when national civil aviation authorities are at the same time ATC service providers and EUROCONTROL decision-makers.

The integration of Europe is making progress. An effective transport system - and air transport is a part of it - is an essential part of the European economies and indispensable for the mobility of their societies. Only when a „Common Market“ below is matched by a „Common Sky“ above can the ambitious goals for free transfer of people, goods and services within Europe take shape and be fully realised.

The only people who can make these things happen are the politicians. In its resolution of May 1997, the Union of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry called for the creation of an independent body which would ensure more efficient utilisation of European airspace, flight routes and flight levels. It therefore welcomes and supports very strongly the initiative of the European Union to implement a high-level group of civil and military experts and to set up a work programme and a time schedule with the intention of creating a single European airspace. It is also strongly in favour of the European Union's decision to become a member of the EUROCONTROL organisation.

**Cologne, 3 March 2000**