

E-2662/02EN

Answer given by Mrs de Palacio
on behalf of the Commission
(12 November 2002)

A number of initiatives relating to air transport and the environment have been launched on the basis of the Commission communication "Air transport and the environment":¹

– With regard to the local impact of air transport on the environment, the Commission has published a proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a Community framework for noise classification of civil subsonic aircraft for the purposes of calculating noise charges,² on which Parliament has given its opinion at first reading.

On 26 March 2002, Parliament and the Council adopted a Directive on the establishment of rules and procedures with regard to the introduction of noise-related operating restrictions at Community airports,³ on the basis of a Commission proposal.⁴ This Directive lays down rules to facilitate the introduction of consistent operating restrictions at airports within the Community.

The Commission has also been following the activities of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) designed to develop a classification system for aircraft that could be used for charging fees in respect of certain gaseous emissions. When the ECAC has finalised its recommendations, the Commission will examine whether it is opportune to designate this method as suitable for introduction at the Community level.

– With regard to the global impact of air transport on the environment, the Commission has had a study carried out in which several economic instruments have been analysed. This study will be published very shortly and the Commission will invite interested parties to submit their comments on its findings. The Commission will take account of Parliament and the Council's proposals and reactions to this study.

– Finally, at the international level, the stance taken by the Community and its Member States has led to emission reductions and the preparation of a new noise standard being placed on the list of priorities for the 2004 Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). In this context, the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, supports flexible ICAO rules on economic incentives.

¹ COM(1999) 640 final.

² COM(2001) 74 final.

³ Directive 2002/30/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 March 2002 on the establishment of rules and procedures with regard to the introduction of noise-related operating restrictions at Community airports, OJ L 85, 28.3.2002.

⁴ COM(2001) 695 final.