Aviation emissions: EU adopts its position on adjusted CORSIA baseline to take account of the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic

The Council today adopted a decision adapting the EU position on the reference period to be used for measuring the growth of CO2 emissions in international aviation, to take account of the unprecedented drop in air traffic due to the coronavirus crisis.

The reference period determines the objective for the stabilisation of emissions to be achieved by international aviation under the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA). Consequently, it also determines the amount of offsets airlines have to purchase to meet that objective. CORSIA was agreed on by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in 2016. The baseline as established in 2018 consisted of the average of the international aviation CO2 emissions covered by CORSIA during 2019 and 2020.

According to the EU position as set out by the decision, the amended baseline period for the emission values used to calculate growth factors should refer to 2019 emission levels.

"The EU fully supports CORSIA as the multilateral mechanism for offsetting international aviation emissions and tackling global warming. Adapting the baseline is crucial to maintaining a similar level of ambition for the scheme and the commitment of ICAO states to the CORSIA pilot phase while taking into account the extremely difficult circumstances created by the pandemic for international air traffic."

Oleg Butković, Croatian Minister for the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, President of the Council

The CORSIA baseline will be discussed by the ICAO Council during its 220th session from 8 to 26 June 2020.

The aim of CORSIA is to contribute to the objectives of the Paris Agreement to address climate change in the context of international aviation. It complements a broader set of measures,
including aircraft technology improvements, operational improvements and sustainable aviation fuels, to achieve carbon-neutral growth from 2020 onwards.

CORSIA is to be reviewed every three years. The first review is scheduled for 2022.

The CORSIA pilot phase is due to start in 2021.

Technically, the decision taken today amends the corresponding Council decision from 2016. It was adopted by written procedure. The text will be published in the EU Official Journal.

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What is CORSIA and how does it work? (ICAO website)
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