

## No-deal Brexit could 'jeopardise' EU aviation safety standards

Written by Martin Banks on 11 March 2019 in News  
News

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has warned that a no-deal Brexit could "jeopardise" aviation safety standards in Europe.



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The EESC says that "contingency measures" are needed "as a matter of urgency" to mitigate possible damage to air travel between the EU and UK.

The body, which represents civil society at the EU level, has backed the European Commission's temporary regulation designed to secure "basic air connectivity", or air services, in case of a no-deal scenario when the UK exits on 29 March.

As a result of Brexit, the EESC warns that the UK will no longer be part of the European Common Aviation Area (ECAA).

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It says that if the UK Withdrawal Agreement is not ratified - the so-called "no deal" scenario - then EU legislation for air services will cease to apply between the EU and the UK resulting in "legal uncertainty, jeopardising planning stability and endangering continued connectivity."

Jacek Krawczyk, who drafted an opinion on the issue for the EESC, said, "The proposed regulation is a temporary solution and represents a contingency plan to reduce the impact of an abrupt Brexit."

"It is the only realistic way to mitigate possible serious negative consequences to be expected for the aviation sector, if the Withdrawal Agreement is not ratified before 29 March."

Further comment came from EESC Irish member Thomas McDonogh, who warned, "Contingency measures are required as a matter of urgency to mitigate possible damage to air travel between the EU and the UK. The EU regulation should only become effective to resolve aviation safety issues which could not otherwise be resolved."

"[The proposed regulation] is the only realistic way to mitigate possible serious negative consequences to be expected for the aviation sector, if the Withdrawal Agreement is not ratified before 29 March" **Jacek Krawczyk, EESC**

"The purpose is not to extend the status quo, but to offer a temporary solution to enable the sector to continue to adhere to the highest safety standards until the UK has established national agencies and national legislation to assume the role of a safety agency," he added.

In the event of no ratification of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement and in the absence of any other legal basis, the EESC says it is unclear: whether certificates issued by the UK under EU law would still be valid; how UK-registered airlines could obtain the required certification after Brexit, and, finally how repair and maintenance companies in the UK could continue to deliver spare parts and services with the licensing as required by EU law.

In order to cover a Brexit no-deal scenario and sort out such issues, the Commission has put together a contingency action plan, which would provide a legal basis to ensure a smooth transition to the application of UK law.

Specific measures would be adopted to ensure continued validity of certificates for certain aeronautical products, parts, appliances and companies.

This, says the Commission, would provide the sector with the required assurances that the certification process will not be jeopardised during the UK's transition from being a Member State to the status of a third country.

The EESC has now urged the EU and UK to conclude Brexit negotiations "without delay in order to re-establish a legal basis for robust airline competition between the carriers."

## **NO-DEAL IMPACT**

Meanwhile, local and regional leaders have also voiced "mounting concern" about the prospect of a no deal and the subsequent impact they fear this would have on their communities.

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) - the EU's assembly of local and regional leaders - warned of the "dire economic and political fallout" a no-deal Brexit would cause to local economies.

CoR President Karl-Heinz Lambertz, cautioned, "There is mounting evidence that a no deal will cause colossal damage to local economies in both the EU and UK, and it will be citizens who foot the bill."

"EU funds will be used to protect its most affected regions, but the warning is clear: the UK's economy is almost five times more exposed to Brexit than the rest of the European Union. We all want a deal and the deal on the table is immeasurably better than a disastrous no-deal."

François Decoster, an EESC member from France, called for new EU funding for those regions directly impacted by Brexit.

Decoster, who is vice-president of the Hauts-de-France region, said: "As the representative of a region next to the Channel and home to one of Europe's biggest ports, Calais, I have known from day one that any form of Brexit will be bad news for our economy."

"There is mounting evidence that a no deal [Brexit] will cause colossal damage to local economies in both the EU and UK, and it will be citizens who foot the bill" **Karl-Heinz Lambertz, CoR President**

"But regions in the north-west of Europe are not the only parts of the EU that should be concerned. It looks likely that Brexit will increase regional disparities in many European countries, as well as in Ireland and the UK. The EU's cohesion policy will need to reflect this."

Further comment came from Michael Murphy, a councillor from Tipperary and leader of the Irish delegation, who said: "Brexit is lose-lose-lose for all involved and the research presented today reinforces this. We can say with certainty that the impact of Brexit will be first felt at the local and regional level."

The Committee has held a series of debates on Brexit over the past 22 months - including twice with Michel Barnier, the EU's chief negotiator, on the UK's departure from the EU.

The debates, which have focused on issues including citizens, trade, and border regions, have highlighted the uncertainty faced by EU and UK citizens and the potential costs of Brexit to ports, the fishing industry, tourism, agriculture, and research and education.

Barnier is also expected to participate at the Committee's summit of regions and cities in Bucharest on 14 March, just two weeks before the UK is expected to leave the soon-to-be 27-strong bloc.

The CoR also conducted a survey of local and regional authorities and local chambers of commerce and commissioned an independent study that, it claims, shows “asymmetric economic consequences” across Europe, with the “worst consequences” in the UK and in Ireland, with Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands among those most affected.

## About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

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