



IATA Statement on the Wise Persons Group (WPG) Report

15 April 2019 - the European Commission published its report from the Wise Person Group on the Future of the Single European Sky (SES).

IATA cautiously welcome many of the recommendations, however the publication of this report, closely following on from Air Traffic Management (ATM) performance being set at lowest levels of ambition in the history of the Performance and Charging scheme requires more in-depth analysis on the specific initiatives and timelines associated with their implementation.

It is clear that reform of the industry is absolutely required. In 2018 delays amounted to more than 19 million minutes, 105% more than in 2017, much of which has been caused by outdated work practices in monopoly suppliers. For this reason, we welcome the recommendation to review ATCO licencing and training, which must be given priority to ensure the capacity crisis does not continue into the long term. The WPG report also highlights areas that the airspace user community have been advocating for several years. Notably, the move to strengthen and simplify economic regulation while adopting a market-driven approach for provision of services, especially at airports, under the direction of a properly resourced and skilled independent economic regulator, can clearly bring benefits to the travelling public. The only way forward is to challenge Air Navigation Service Providers to deliver consistent improvements or face financial penalties.

On the operational side, the empowerment of the Network Manager to run the network, aligned with the full integration of airports is welcomed. However, in the area of infrastructure management and development of a common charging scheme and development of a Seamless Upper Airspace, the airspace user community requires far more comprehensive information and analysis of how this will be achieved before a position can be delivered. The member states must be encouraged and incentivized to put aside the sovereignty issues blocking reform, judging by the delays in the difficulties encountered by SES2+ this however may never become a reality. The timely development and acceptance of new regulatory frameworks to support same must be a key process for the new Commission commencing in 2019.

The European Commission (EC) recently commissioned an academic study on benchmarking of ANSPs. This study conservatively estimated EU-wide cost-inefficiencies in the range of 25% to 30%. The proposed development of a new monopoly data provider is an area for concern. While the economic benefit of separation of support service provision from ATS should be realized it must be and must be supported by transparent and strong cost benefit analysis. IATA would welcome the reorganization of supporting ATM infrastructure at a European level, to be provided by the best value operator and subject to a periodic tendering process. This should deliver better value services and reduce the waste from duplication of infrastructure designed along national lines rather than focused on the needs of a European air transport network.

While we support the intention of the WPG report, IATA will now take the opportunity to go through the report in some detail, in conjunction with our members and provide positions on each of the recommendations. While this will take some time we encourage the EC to prioritize the areas of reform of ATCO training and licencing to address the capacity issues for 2020 and beyond.

Airlines are committed to supporting DG MOVE, PRB, States and ANSPs in identifying and achieving the Single European Sky ensuring that flying is the safest and most economical way of travelling for years to come.