



A4E Statement on European Commission (EC) Single European Sky Regulatory Update Proposal

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The COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity for aviation to “build back better” and prepare its outdated air traffic management system for a return to increasing traffic levels in the future. Even in these difficult times, a fully implemented Single and Digital European Sky (SES) is key to maintaining safety levels and ensuring efficiency gains as traffic grows. It will improve aviation’s environmental footprint, reduce ATC delays and deliver a cost-efficient air traffic management (ATM) service provision, strengthening the single aviation market in Europe. An updated SES regulatory framework is therefore essential in realizing these goals. A 2020 A4E study conducted by the University of Bergamo on “The Cost of Non-Europe in Aviation” found that [Europe’s unharmonized airspace and incomplete Single Sky is costing the EU up to €17.4 billion per year.](#)

A4E appreciates the European Commission’s work in putting this updated SES2+* proposal back on the table. We particularly welcome its clear focus on SES efficiency gains to benefit the environment, which will help our airlines meet Green Deal goals. In our view, however, full implementation of the SES must include an enhanced governance structure, with airlines -- the primary customers of Europe’s ATM system -- at the heart of a collaborative decision-making process.

We now need to assess whether our recommendations for a digital transformation of the sector and a clear governance structure are adequately reflected in the updated proposal. Only this would ensure it is “future-proof”. As the update concerns not only the SES regulatory framework but also the EASA basic regulation, amongst others -- this is a complex task for all stakeholders involved. A4E looks forward to providing further input and working closely with the EU institutions to ensure a swift implementation.

***Note to editors**

The current update is based on work from the “Original proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the Single European Sky (recast)” -- known under the abbreviation SES2+ -- which was adopted by the Commission on 11 June 2013 and includes developments since 2009/2013 in the different areas concerning regulations and technological advances. (This represents an enormous undertaking involving various airlines at different points in time).