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## TEXTS ADOPTED

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### **P8\_TA(2017)0054**

#### **Aviation Strategy for Europe**

#### **European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2017 on an Aviation Strategy for Europe (2016/2062(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission communication of 7 December 2015 entitled ‘An Aviation Strategy for Europe’ (COM(2015)0598),
- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and in particular Article 4(2)(b) and (g), Article 16 and Titles VI and X thereof,
- having regard to Protocol No 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 14 July 2016 on ‘An Aviation Strategy for Europe’<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Commission Decision 2012/21/EU of 20 December 2011 on the application of Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to State aid in the form of public service compensation granted to certain undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication on ‘Guidelines on State aid to airports and airlines’<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the draft Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 7 December 2015 on common rules in the

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<sup>1</sup> EESC, AC TEN/581.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 7, 11.1.2012, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 99, 4.4.2014, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 262, 19.7.2016, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 382, 15.10.2016, p. 1.

field of civil aviation and establishing a European Union Aviation Safety Agency, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council (COM(2015)0613),

- having regard to the conclusions of the high-level conference ‘A Social Agenda for Transport’, held on 4 June 2015 in Brussels<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 February 2016 on the special situation of islands<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the outcome of the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Assembly, held in 2016,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 551/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2004 on the organisation and use of the airspace in the Single European Sky,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 November 2015 on aviation<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 October 2015 on allocation by the World Radiocommunication Conference, held in Geneva from 2 to 27 November 2015 (WRC-15), of the necessary radio spectrum band to support the future development of a satellite-based technology to enable global flight tracking systems<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 June 2011 on international air agreements under the Treaty of Lisbon<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 April 2007 on the establishment of a European common aviation area<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 12 March 2014 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the implementation of the Single European Sky (recast)<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 12 March 2014 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 in the field of aerodromes, air traffic management and air navigation services<sup>8</sup>,
- having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 5 February 2014 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation or long delay of flights

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/media/events/event/high-level-conference-2015-social-agenda-transport\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/media/events/event/high-level-conference-2015-social-agenda-transport_en)

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0049.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0394.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0392.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 380 E, 11.12.2012, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 74 E, 20.3.2008, p. 658.

<sup>7</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2014)0220.

<sup>8</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2014)0221.

and Regulation (EC) No 2027/97 on air carrier liability in respect of the carriage of passengers and their baggage by air<sup>1</sup>,

- having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 12 December 2012 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on common rules for the allocation of slots at EU airports (recast)<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 29 October 2015 on safe use of remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), commonly known as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), in the field of civil aviation<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 2 July 2013 on ‘The EU’s External Aviation Policy – Addressing Future Challenges’<sup>4</sup>,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the European Aviation Summit held at Schiphol airport (Netherlands) on 20 and 21 January 2016<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to the Chicago Convention of 7 December 1944,
  - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (A8-0021/2017),
- A. whereas EU transport policy ultimately aims at serving the interests of European citizens and businesses by providing ever greater connectivity, the highest level of safety and security and barrier-free markets;
- B. whereas stringent standards of safety should remain a key objective when pursuing competitiveness in air transport;
- C. whereas the EU single aviation market is a most successful example of regional liberalisation of air transport, which has strongly contributed to unprecedented levels of air connectivity by expanding travel opportunities within and outside Europe while lowering prices; whereas the aviation sector is a fundamental part of the European transport network, indispensable to ensure connectivity and territorial cohesion within the EU and worldwide; whereas the remote and isolated location of the outermost regions leaves them, unlike more centrally located and well integrated regions, no alternative to air transport; whereas the objective of supporting increased air connectivity should be not only to expand the network of connections but also to ensure an appropriate quality of connectivity in terms of flight frequency, network range and convenience of schedules;
- D. whereas the aviation sector is a driver with a multiplier effect for growth and job

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2014)0092.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 434, 23.12.2015, p. 217.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0390.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 75, 26.2.2016, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> <https://english.eu2016.nl/documents/reports/2016/01/20/report-aviation-summit-2016>

creation and is an important pillar of the EU economy, fostering innovation, trade and the quality of jobs, which has significant direct and indirect benefits for citizens; whereas air traffic growth and availability and variety of flight connections promote economic growth, confirming that air transport acts as a catalyst for economic development; whereas regional and local airports also play a significant role in the development of regions by increasing their competitiveness and facilitating access for tourism;

- E. whereas 4,7 million jobs in the Union are directly (1,9 million) and indirectly (2,8 million) generated by air transport, airports and the related manufacturing industry; whereas a further 917 000 jobs elsewhere in the global economy are supported by the European aviation industry; whereas the mobile and transnational nature of aviation makes it difficult to detect social abuses and circumvention of labour standards and means that it is impossible to tackle the problems solely at national level; whereas recent ILO findings suggest a deterioration of working conditions in the aviation sector; whereas greater diversification in contracts can be a tool for more flexibility, but can also be misused for purposes of ‘rule shopping’ to avoid paying social security contributions;
  - F. whereas the lack of proper implementation of EU legislation and political unwillingness in the Council prevent the aviation sector from unleashing its full potential, thus damaging its competitiveness and leading to greater costs at the expense of businesses, passengers and the economy;
  - G. whereas in a sector that is driven by technology and by research and innovation, which require both large-scale investment and a developed infrastructure, the success of a strategy lies in its capacity to adopt a long-term vision with properly planned investment and to fully take account of all transport modes;
  - H. whereas air transport plays an important role in meeting the EU’s climate objectives by introducing measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
  - I. whereas, even though the Single European Sky provides for the establishment of functional airspace blocks (FABs), the implementation of those FABs has, to date, been considerably delayed; whereas, therefore, the Commission has estimated that some EUR 5 billion per year are being lost because of the lack of progress in this regard;
  - J. whereas security is one of the challenges that the aviation industry faces most directly;
1. Welcomes the Commission’s communication on an Aviation Strategy for Europe and its effort to identify sources for boosting the sector by finding new market opportunities and dismantling barriers, and for its proposals to meet and anticipate new challenges on the basis of a common European vision, by developing modern regulatory frameworks; believes that, in a longer-term perspective, a further holistic and more ambitious approach should be embraced in order to provide the necessary boost for a sustainable and competitive European aviation industry;
  2. Believes that safety is a guiding principle for the European Aviation Strategy and that it must be continuously improved; welcomes, therefore, the review of the EASA (European Air Safety Agency) Basic Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 216/2008), aimed at achieving the highest levels of safety in aviation; calls on the Commission and the

Council, in this respect, to equip EASA with sufficient resources and staff to ensure high safety standards and to strengthen its role on the international scene;

3. Urges the Council and the Member States finally to make swift progress on other essential dossiers which are currently deadlocked, such as the Recast of the Regulation on the Implementation of the Single European Sky (SES2+) and the revision of the Slot Regulation and the Air Passenger Rights Regulations; calls on the Commission to rethink ongoing initiatives and propose viable alternatives to remove the deficiencies of the aviation sector resulting from the late and incomplete implementation of EU legislation such as the Single European Sky (SES); stresses that if legal clarity and certainty are to be ensured the publication of guidelines, although helpful, is no substitute for the proper revision of the existing regulations;
4. Stresses that the aviation files blocked in Council are meant to equip the EU with better legal certainty and a strengthened framework for the protection of Air passengers' rights, a more efficient and rational use of EU airspace and improved provisions to implement the Single European Sky, all essential elements for the realisation of the Aviation strategy; calls on the Council to take steps to move forward the negotiations on these files;

#### ***International dimension of the Aviation Strategy***

5. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to revise Regulation (EC) No 868/2004 addressing unfair current practices, such as unacceptable state aid, which is neither adequate nor effective, thus shedding light on the major concerns surrounding potential distortions of competition under European rules; stresses, however, that neither an unacceptable trend towards protectionism, nor, on their own, measures to ensure fair competition can guarantee the competitiveness of the EU aviation sector;
6. Believes that the European aviation sector, though facing increased pressure from new competitors, many of which have used air transport as a strategic tool for international development, can fit into a competitive global environment by further building on and developing its assets, such as high safety and security standards, the role of EASA, geographical positioning, an innovative industry and social and environmental goals; strongly believes that competition from third countries, if fair, should be seen as an opportunity to develop further an innovative European aviation model that has the potential to provide a unique and competitive response to the specificities of competitors;
7. Believes that the possibility to attract foreign investment is important for the competitiveness of EU airlines and should not be hampered; welcomes, therefore, the Commission's intention to issue guidelines that will bring clarity regarding the ownership and control rules, as laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008, with particular reference to the 'effective control' criteria, so as to ensure the effectiveness of those rules;
8. Welcomes the initiative to negotiate at EU level air transport agreements and bilateral aviation safety agreements with third countries representing emerging and strategic markets (China, Japan, ASEAN, Turkey, Qatar, the UAE, Armenia, Mexico, China, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia), and encourages prompt and constructive negotiations; recalls that new agreements should be correctly implemented and enforced

by all parties and need to include a fair competition clause on the basis of international standards (ICAO, ILO); calls on the Commission and the Council, on a basis of respect for Article 218 TFEU, to fully involve Parliament at all stages of negotiations;

9. Calls on the Commission to make negotiating air transport agreements with third countries conditional on high safety standards, appropriate labour and social standards and participation in the market-based climate change instrument for air transport emissions and, in air transport agreements, to ensure equal market access, equal ownership conditions and a level playing field based on reciprocity;
10. Asks the Commission for a swift conclusion of ongoing negotiations, and in the future to launch new aviation dialogues with other strategic aviation partners; stresses that air services agreements also contribute to the promotion of technological progress, as well as to the implementation and strengthening of other European policies, such as the neighbourhood policy;

### ***Consolidating the EU single market in aviation***

11. Recalls that airspace is also part of the EU single market, and that any fragmentation resulting from its inefficient use, as well as diverging national practices (concerning, for instance, operational procedures, taxes, levies, etc), causes longer flight times, delays, extra fuel burn, and higher levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, in addition to negatively impacting the rest of the market and hampering the EU's competitiveness;
12. Notes that Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 551/2004 foresees, without prejudice to the sovereignty of Member States over their airspace, the establishment of a single European upper flight information region (EUIR), and calls on the Commission to implement this, as it will allow the overcoming of regional bottlenecks and enable continuity of air services in the densest parts of the airspace in the event of unforeseen circumstances or disruptions of air traffic; believes that the EUIR will allow the gradual establishment of a Trans-European Motorway of the Sky, which would be another step towards the completion of the Single European Sky and a cost-effective management of the EU airspace; welcomes the progress already made in the field of air traffic management aiming at increasing efficiency and reducing costs and emissions, in particular thanks to the work of the Network Manager, and calls on the Member States to complete the FABs without any further delay in order to facilitate further progress towards the Single European Sky;
13. Strongly believes that the aviation sector should fully benefit from European satellite-based technologies, such as EGNOS and Galileo, which allow safer and more efficient navigation and approach procedures while enabling the full deployment of the Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) project; therefore insists on the need for the broad implementation of these technologies; points out that to ensure the proper deployment of SESAR, and in the interests of achieving global interoperability, a specific and ambitious budget – other than the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) budget – should be allocated for its implementation;
14. Takes note of the volume of air traffic, which is currently considerable and is forecast to increase in the next few years, as well as of the capacity constraints of European airports as regards accommodating some 2 million flights by 2035; stresses that this will require a coordinated and efficient use of airport and airspace capacity so as to mitigate

congestion;

15. Stresses the vital importance of the aviation sector for growth, job creation and the development of tourism; stresses that small and regional airports play a key role in promoting connectivity, territorial cohesion, social inclusion and economic growth, especially for the outermost regions and for islands; sees, in this respect, a need for strategic planning for the European airport system that can identify current capacities, predicted demand, current bottlenecks and future infrastructure needs at European level, and that can maintain EU citizens' access to aviation services;
16. Acknowledges the significant connectivity gap within the EU, characterised by a lower number of air connections in certain parts of the Union, and the importance of regional connectivity (including geographical areas excluded from the TEN-T); encourages the Commission to continue monitoring and addressing air connectivity within the EU;
17. Believes that many of the significant limits to growth, both in the air and on the ground (e.g. capacity crunch, under- and over-utilisation of infrastructures, different Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) or limited investment), as well as the gaps in air connectivity between different regions of the EU, can be addressed by taking connectivity, at all levels (national, European and international), as one of the main indicators when assessing and planning actions in the sector;
18. Considers that connectivity should not only be limited to number, frequency and quality of air transport services, but should also be assessed in the context of an integrated modern transport network and should take in other criteria, such as time, territorial continuity, greater network integration, accessibility, availability of transport alternatives, affordability and environmental costs, in order to reflect the actual added value of a route; calls, therefore, on the Commission to explore the possibility of developing an EU indicator based on other existing indices and on the exploratory work already carried out by Eurocontrol and the Airport Observatory;
19. Believes that such a connectivity index, including a positive cost-benefit analysis, should consider air connections from a broad perspective, while not undermining the EU's objective of territorial cohesion, which will be enhanced by the forthcoming interpretative guidelines on the Public Service Obligations rules; stresses that this index can serve the interests of overall strategic planning, so as to avoid wasting taxpayers' money by making a distinction in economic terms between viable opportunities from unprofitable projects, in order, among other things, to favour the profitable specialisation of airports, including clusters or networks of airports, avoid the future emergence of 'ghost airports', and ensure efficient use of airport capacity and airspace, and also by identifying intermodal, cost-efficient and sustainable solutions;
20. Believes that the benefits of the complementarity of all modes of transport without exception should be unleashed in order to improve mobility and achieve a resilient transport network in the interests of the users, both in passengers and cargo transport; points out that intermodality, by permitting a modal shift, is the only way to assure the dynamic and sustainable development of a competitive EU aviation sector; underlines that intermodality allows a more efficient use of infrastructure, by expanding and taking into account airport catchment areas and avoiding their overlapping, which would also free up slots and contribute to creating a favourable environment for trade, tourism and cargo operations; recognises the successes achieved in this field through the integration

of rail and air infrastructures, and encourages further progress in this respect;

21. Reiterates that the TEN-T corridors are the backbone for the development of multimodal options where airports are core hubs; regrets that multimodal initiatives across Europe are fragmented and limited in number; stresses the need for fast, efficient and user-friendly connections between public transport networks and airport infrastructure; calls on both the Commission and the Member States to give greater priority to the multimodal objective within the TEN-T corridors while removing bottlenecks; calls on the Commission promptly to present its proposal for a multimodal and interoperable approach to transport, with the aviation sector fully integrated, and calls on the Member States to make better use of the financial instruments at their disposal to promote intermodal connections;
22. Considers that in order to boost the attractiveness of intermodal transport across Europe, barrier-free solutions, real-time information and integrated services (e.g. integrated ticketing) should be offered to all passengers (including persons with reduced mobility); points out that EU-funded projects have proved the technical feasibility of developing multimodal information and ticketing systems; invites the Commission, therefore, to support their actual delivering to passengers across the EU;
23. Believes that transport operators and service providers will engage in finding intermodal and multimodal solutions if, through an EU regulatory framework, clarification and legal certainty are provided as regards passenger rights, liability, delays and cancellations, security clearance, open data and data-sharing standards; calls on the Commission to act in this respect;
24. Notes that both public and private financing in the aviation sector are vital to guarantee territorial cohesion, foster innovation and maintain or regain European leadership of our industry; recalls that all financing must respect EU state aid guidelines and competition law; maintains that when granting public support it has to be ensured that the investment in question will be cost-effective and fit for purpose;
25. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, in line with the Commission's 'Guidelines on State aid to airports and airlines' and with the Commission notice concerning the scope of state aid under Article 107(1) TFEU, to maintain a long-term strategy to address, on the one hand, the surplus of loss-making airports in regions where other modes of transport are available and on the other hand, the contribution of secondary airports to the development, competitiveness and integration of EU regions;
26. Notes the importance of a favourable regulatory framework for airports to attract and mobilise private investment; considers that the Commission's evaluation of the Airport Charges Directive, in conjunction with effective airline/airport consultation, should help clarify whether the current provisions are an effective tool to promote competition against the risk of abuse of monopoly power and to further the interests of European consumers and promote competition, or whether a reform is needed; acknowledges the contribution of non-aeronautical revenues to the commercial viability of airports;
27. Notes that the Commission announced, in its Aviation Strategy published in December 2015, an evaluation of Council Directive 96/67/EC on ground handling services at EU airports; supports the inclusion of ground handling within the scope of EASA, with the aim of covering the entire aviation safety chain;

### *Aviation Strategy: looking ahead*

28. Believes that the entire aviation value chain has the potential to be a strategic sector for investment, which needs to be further exploited by setting long-term objectives and by granting incentives to smart initiatives fulfilling those objectives, such as greener airports or aircraft, noise reduction, connection between airport facilities and public transport; invites the Commission and the Member States to look into further measures to promote such initiatives, including through the effective use of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), and to continue promoting and financing programmes such as Clean Sky and SESAR; emphasises that the aeronautics industry is a major contributor to competitiveness in the EU aviation sector, lending strong support to the promotion of cleaner technologies and supporting SESAR deployment;
29. Takes note of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by the aviation sector; stresses the wide range of actions already taken and to be taken for achieving a reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gas emissions, both technically by developing alternative fuels and more efficient aircraft, and politically by abiding by international agreements; welcomes the agreement reached by the 39th Assembly of ICAO on 6 October 2016, with the adoption of a Global Market-Based Measure (GMBM) to reduce international aviation emissions, and the commitment entered into by 65 countries to participate in the voluntary phase by 2027, which means that approximately 80 % of emissions above 2020 levels will be offset by the scheme until 2035; stresses the importance of maintaining beyond 31 December 2016 the derogation granted under the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to emissions from flights to or from an airfield in an outermost region as defined in Article 349 TFEU; welcomes the Commission's intention to review the EU's measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from aviation in light of this agreement;
30. Is of the opinion that, in view also of the Commission's Circular Economy Package, further initiatives aimed at increasing environmental capacity and reducing emissions and noise from operational activities from, to and within airports should be encouraged, for example by adopting renewable fuels (e.g. biofuels), by developing efficient systems for environment-friendly certified recycling, dismantling and reuse of aircraft, by promoting 'green airports' and 'green way-to-airports', and by achieving the most efficient logistics management;
31. Calls for the best emission-reducing practices within the sector to be collected and disseminated, bearing in mind that high environmental standards must be preserved and enhanced over time in order to ensure that aviation develops sustainably;
32. Urges the Commission and the Member States to monitor strictly the new procedures which have been in force from June 2016 to reduce noise and ultrafine particles in exhaust gas emissions from aircraft taking off from airports close to cities and populated hubs, so as to improve quality of life and especially air quality;
33. Acknowledges the substantial cost of security measures; stresses that the security challenges, including cybersecurity, facing the aviation sector will increase in the future, requiring an immediate shift to a more risk-based and intelligence-based approach and a reactive security system that improves the security of airports' facilities and makes it possible to adapt to evolving threats without constantly responding with new measures or merely shifting the risk without reducing it;

34. Welcomes the Commission's proposal for a EU certification system for aviation security screening equipment; insists on the need for a consistent implementation of the existing rules regarding staff recruitment and training; calls on the Commission to look into the possibility of deepening the one-stop security concept, and of developing a EU pre-check system allowing pre-registered EU travellers to transit security clearance in a more efficient manner; urges the Member States to commit to sharing intelligence systematically and to exchange best practices on airport security systems;
35. Takes note of the High Level Report on Conflict Zones, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the report's recommendations are implemented, including the sharing of information to ensure the development of an EU risk assessment and the ability to share information in a speedy manner; also underlines that security concerns arising from non-cooperative military flights with no active transponders must continue to be addressed;
36. Considers that innovation is a prerequisite for a competitive European aviation industry; notes that relative to other transport modes, aviation is already a leading sector in putting to use the benefits of digitalisation, information and communication technologies and open data, and encourages the sector to continue to take a lead in this process, while ensuring fair competition, interoperability of systems, neutrality, and transparency of access to clear and concise information for all users, such as, for instance, consumers booking an entire journey or freight companies involved in air cargo operations; welcomes the Commission's proposal for an aviation big data project and asks for clarification on its implementation;
37. Recalls the 'sweep' of travel service websites across the Union undertaken by the Commission and national enforcement bodies in 2013; notes that this 'sweep' uncovered significant problems with more than two-thirds of the websites checked; calls on the Commission to report more fully on the progress made in bringing travel websites into compliance with EU law, and its future plans for enforcement in this area, as regards both online and offline air ticket sales; recalls that consumers must always have a route available to them for submitting complaints to traders and claiming refunds; believes this route should be available in a manner which does not dissuade consumers from exercising their rights and should be clearly signposted to consumers; calls on the Commission to work closely with national enforcement bodies in order to ensure that traders meet these requirements;
38. Welcomes the innovation and economic development which can be fostered by the further development of the civil use of remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPASs); notes that the market for RPASs is growing rapidly, and that such aircraft are increasingly used for private purposes, in commercial activities and by public authorities in the performance of their tasks; underlines the urgent need for swift adoption of a clear, proportionate, harmonised, and risk-based regulatory framework for RPASs in order to stimulate investment and innovation in the sector and fully exploit its enormous potential while maintaining the highest possible safety standards;
39. Recalls that regulation of the aviation sector should take into account the specific needs of general aviation, on a basis that provides for individual air transport solutions, as well as for air sports activities;

***Social agenda of the Aviation Strategy***

40. Acknowledges the need to clarify the ‘home base’ criterion and the definition of ‘principal place of business’, so as to ensure that they can be applied consistently and effectively prevent use of flags of convenience and ‘rule-shopping’ practices; recalls that one of the core responsibilities of EASA is to issue both Air Operations Certificates and Third Countries Operators authorisations, with the purpose of guaranteeing safety and contributing to improving working conditions;
41. Calls on EASA and the Member States to continue scrutinising new business and employment models in order to ensure aviation safety, and asks the Commission to regulate where necessary; notes that particular attention should be paid to, among other things, zero-hour contracts, pay-to-fly schemes, bogus self-employment and the situation of crew from third countries on EU-registered aircraft; emphasises the importance of the regulation on Occurrence Reporting in Aviation and ‘just culture’ practices for strengthening and improving safety standards, as well as health and working conditions;
42. Recalls that high-quality training contributes to aviation safety; highlights EASA’s key contribution to the establishment of common training and safety standards for pilots, crew members and air traffic controllers, also through its Virtual Academy, and calls on the Member States to invest in lifelong education and training for all parts of the aviation value chain, as the success of European aviation is highly dependent on skilled workers and innovation; recognises the need to address any skills gaps which may emerge; emphasises the importance of partnerships between educational institutions, research centres and the social partners in order to update training programmes and ensure that they reflect labour market needs;
43. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to expand dual training models in aeronautical engineering, and to extend them through international cooperation;
44. Encourages the Commission to come forward with concrete initiatives in order to protect workers’ rights; calls on the Member States to guarantee all workers in the aviation sector decent working conditions, including health and safety at work, regardless of the size and type of company which employs them, the place of employment or the underlying contract;
45. Notes that all airlines operating in the European Union must be fully compliant with EU and Member State social and employment requirements; points out that there are significant differences between Member States as regards working conditions and social protection and that undertakings exploit freedom of establishment in order to reduce costs; calls on the Member States to put a stop to this damaging competition; calls on the Commission and the Member States to present proposals on how to prevent indirect employment being misused to circumvent EU and national legislation on taxation and social security in the aviation sector; calls on the Commission and the Member States to prevent social abuses and circumvention of labour standards by guaranteeing protection for those providing information, facilitating open reporting and enhancing cooperation between Member States’ labour inspectorates; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the application and proper enforcement of labour law, social legislation and collective agreements for airlines operating in a given Member State;
46. Underlines that the right to form and join a trade union and to undertake collective action is a fundamental right and must be respected, as laid down in Article 12 of the

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; rejects any attempts to undermine the right to strike in the aviation sector; highlights the importance of having strong, independent social partners in the aviation sector, a regular, institutionalised social dialogue at all levels, and participation and representation of employees in company matters; insists on a proper consultation process and strengthened social dialogue ahead of any EU initiative concerning the aviation sector; welcomes attempts by the social partners to negotiate an agreement on the working conditions and social rights of employees in the European aviation sector; encourages them to negotiate collective agreements in all parts of the sector in line with national laws and practices, as such agreements are an effective instrument in combating a race to the bottom regarding social, working and employment standards and in ensuring decent remuneration for all workers;

47. Believes that no employee should be in doubt on the applicable labour legislation or on where he or she is entitled to social security; draws attention to the special situation of highly mobile workers in the aviation sector in this context, and calls for better coordination of social security systems within the EU; insists that the need for further clarification of applicable law and competent courts vis-à-vis the employment contracts of mobile workers in aviation should be assessed in close cooperation with the representatives of those workers;

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48. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.