



Pilots join initiative to ramp up use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels

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Europe's pilot community is joining a coalition of aviation and environmental organisations, [calling for a ramp-up of Sustainable Aviation Fuels \(SAFs\)](#) as a scalable, long-term solution to decarbonise aviation. Europe's environmental ambitions have taken a concrete shape under the EU Green Deal but cutting greenhouse gas emissions remains a major challenge. Yet, pilots see an opportunity for the EU to be an early leader in producing truly sustainable SAFs and untapping their full potential.

"The aviation industry is conscious about its impact on environment and, as pilots, we are taking our responsibility for curbing the climate threat," says Otjan de Bruijn, ECA President. "We support the EU Green Deal and we believe SAFs are giving us a pathway to meet the Paris Agreement goals."

Under the EU Green Deal, Europe pledged to achieve a net-zero-carbon economy by 2050, which would require a 90% reduction of emissions for the transport. SAFs have the potential to significantly contribute to this target, cutting airlines' carbon emissions by [80% compared with traditional jet fuel](#).

"The question is: How do we ramp up production and use of SAF without a negative impact on the environment," says Yngve Carlsen, President of Norway's Cockpit Association and Chair of ECA's Environment Taskforce. "There are different approaches to increase production capacity – some more promising than others, and some that could fail to deliver emission reductions or cause unintended negative environmental impacts. Let's get it right from the start!"

This is why airlines, workers and environmental groups agreed on the key principles that must guide the growth of a European SAF industry. In a [consensus statement](#) the coalition urged decision-makers to go for a sustainable, future-proof framework for SAFs.

"Nobody is questioning the potential of SAFs but there is a risk that decision-makers opt for a 'quick-win' approach by e.g. overfocussing on crop-based biofuels. This was the case in the road sector, which relied heavily on unsustainable, food-based biofuels. We need to do better. Aviation must commit to supporting advanced fuels made from wastes, residues and even more importantly – electrofuels," states ECA's Environment Taskforce Chair.

The European Commission is expected to adopt the so-called 'ReFuelEU Aviation' proposal, which aims at boosting the supply and demand for SAFs in the EU. This proposal is an important first step, along with the amendment of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) along the same direction in 2021. The coalition urges that biofuels with high sustainability risks (e.g. biofuels from dedicated cropland) are excluded from the Directive.

"Pilots will not be able to fix aviation's climate challenges by themselves, but this is not stopping us from contributing – together with other stakeholders – in the best possible way towards reducing aviation's environmental footprint," says Otjan de Bruijn, ECA

President. “What is at stake – preserving our planet – requires the most serious and rigorous approach.”

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Note to editors: ECA is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 40.000 pilots from across Europe, striving for the highest levels of aviation safety and fostering social rights and quality employment for pilots in Europe. Website: www.eurocockpit.be & twitter [@eu_cockpit](https://twitter.com/eu_cockpit)