



For immediate release

25 November 2011

## **Airline Associations: Member States must stop procrastinating on Single European Sky**

### **Current economic climate makes project more important than ever**

Four airline associations - AEA, ELFAA, ERA and IACA<sup>1</sup> - today echoed the plea from the European Commission, calling on Member States to stop procrastinating on the Single European Sky project and start finally delivering on their obligations.

The current economic climate makes the Single European Sky, which will improve the efficiency of European Air Traffic Management (ATM), more important than ever. Today, the fragmented system is having an enormous detrimental impact on airlines, their passengers and the environment in terms of time, fuel burn and money.

Member States are trying to escape their Single European Sky commitments, and today the Commission has instructed the majority of Member States to revise their performance plans.

Airlines consider the Europe-wide targets set by the Commission as a bare minimum to implement the long-overdue improvements of the European ATM system. However, Member States have already watered down these plans, and only a few come close to fulfilling the agreed performance targets.

Airlines also regret the lack of meaningful implementation of the Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) which bring together blocks of national airspace and are therefore an essential part of the project. The concept of FABs currently seems to be just 'window dressing' by Member States.

"Airlines need urgent deliverables. Member States must stop procrastinating and make progress towards a genuine Single European Sky," said Ulrich Schulte-Strathaus, Secretary General, AEA.

"The current economic climate should be an added incentive, but Member States are now using this as an excuse to stall the project," agreed John Hanlon, Secretary General, ELFAA. "Member States need to go back to the drawing board and work together with the Commission to revise their performance plans."

"For far too long Member States have unduly benefitted from the full cost-recovery mechanism which has reduced the incentive to boost efficiency. As a result, airlines and consumers have had to pay for the system's inefficiencies. It is time for Member States to show a real commitment to reform," said Sylviane Lust, Director General of IACA.

1. AEA (Association of European Airlines), ELFAA (European Low Fares Airline Association), ERA (European Regions Airline Association) and IACA (International Air Carrier Association).



"It is important that the public knows that there are no insurmountable technical obstacles to the early implementation of the Single European Sky: speedier progress is constrained only by lack of political will," concluded Mike Ambrose, Director General, ERA.

\*\*\*\*\*

For further information, please contact:

**Association of European Airlines (AEA)**

Victoria Moores

Phone: +32 (0)2 6398976

Email: [victoria.moores@aea.be](mailto:victoria.moores@aea.be)

**European Low Fares Airline Association (ELFAA)**

Press Office – Grayling

Phone: +32 (0)2 25049001

Email: [press@elfaa.com](mailto:press@elfaa.com)

**European Regions Airline Association (ERAA)**

Lesley Shepherd

Phone: +44 (0) 1276 485578 or + 44 (0)7713 984793

Email: [lesley.shepherd@eraa.org](mailto:lesley.shepherd@eraa.org)

**International Air Carrier Association (IACA)**

Amy Spenlove-Brown

Phone: +32 (0) 2 546 1060

Email: [amy.spenlove-brown@iaca.be](mailto:amy.spenlove-brown@iaca.be)