

Αρχείο
Φαν. Ιρακ.

Αθήνα, 24 Μαρτίου 2003

Εν όψει του Συμβουλίου των Υπουργών Μεταφορών που θα λάβει χώρα στις 27 και 28 Μαρτίου στις Βρυξέλλες, ως Προεδρία επεξεργαστήκαμε ένα κείμενο που αφορά τις συνέπειες τού πολέμου κατά του Ιράκ στον τομέα των αερομεταφορών.

Το σημείωμα που σας επισυνάπτω έχει ήδη διαβιβασθεί στην αρμόδια Επιτροπή για τις Μεταφορές, κ. Loyola de Palacio και στους 15 ομολόγους μου Υπουργούς με την προοπτική να συζητηθεί ως ξεχωριστό θέμα της ημερήσιας διάταξης στο επικείμενο Συμβούλιο.

Παράλληλα έχει διαβιβασθεί στην κοινοβουλευτική επιτροπή του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου που είναι αρμόδια για την Περιφερειακή Πολιτική, τον Τουρισμό και τις Μεταφορές (RETT) και συγκεκριμένα στον Πρόεδρό της και στους Έλληνες ευρωβουλευτές - μέλη της επιτροπής με σκοπό την προώθηση ενός ψηφίσματος από την Ολομέλεια του Σώματος κατά την προσεχή Σύνοδο (7-10 Απριλίου).

Τέλος, έχει διαβιβασθεί στον επικεφαλής της ομάδας των Ελλήνων σοσιαλιστών του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου, κ. Γεώργιο Κατηφόρη με σκοπό να διανεμηθεί στους αντίστοιχους επικεφαλείς των άλλων κρατών και να τεθεί προς συζήτηση κατά τη συνεδρίαση της σοσιαλιστικής ομάδας που θα λάβει χώρα στην Αθήνα από 31 Μαρτίου-2 Απριλίου.

Λόγω της μείζονος σπουδαιότητας του θέματος θα πρότεινα, στο πλαίσιο της παρέμβασης του Πρωθυπουργού ενώπιον της σοσιαλιστικής ομάδας του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου σχετικά με την κρίση και τις συνέπειες του πολέμου, να γίνει ιδιαίτερη μνεία στις επιπτώσεις στον τομέα των αερομεταφορών.

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΒΕΡΕΛΗΣ

POSITION PAPER

on the consequences of the Iraqi War for the European air-transport sector

i. This Position Paper has been prepared by the Hellenic Presidency after consultation with major agencies and associations of the European aviation sector, namely the Association of European Airlines (AEA), European Regions Airline Association (ERA) , Airports Council International –Europe (ACI-Europe) and European Cockpit Association (ECA).

ii. The aim is to initiate an in –depth discussion between member –states in order to analyse the difficult situation encountered by the aviation sector and examine the possibility of urgently taking specific measures in order to alleviate any negative consequences of the Iraqi War.

iii. The conflict in the Middle East is anticipated to have a far greater effect on European air transport than on the air transport sector of other regions. For instance, 17 out of 30 members of the Association of European Airlines operate services to the Middle East from Europe. Closure of airspace for commercial aviation in the Middle East and adjacent areas, as a result of the military operations, will negatively impact long haul traffic to and from the Near and Far East. The conflict is anticipated to mainly affect the traffic patterns of the airlines that operate in close proximity to the region.

iv. Already affected by the consequences of September 11th , as well as the US and EU economic downturn, the European air –transport sector’s already difficult situation is expected to be further aggravated by the war in Iraq. It is very well known that, as a result of the events in 2001 the European airlines reported a loss of 3.2 billion Euros. It is expected that a further 2.5 billion Euros would be added to these losses as a direct consequence of the war in Iraq, depending of course on the duration and scale of military operations. In addition to that, after the dramatic events of September 11th , European carriers laid off almost 10% of the aviation workforce, taking , at the same time, drastic measures to reduce their operating costs.

v. The European aviation industry (more than 125 airlines and 450 airports) is a major contributor to the Member States’ Gross Domestic Product and to the international economy as a whole. Considering the economic importance of the European air –transport sector and its vital role, strong political, and , if needed, financial support will be required.

vi. The Member States need to develop an Action Plan comprising of short and medium –term measures for the European air –transport sector . In this respect, a Crisis Management Group comprising of regulators , service providers and stakeholders could probably contribute to this important and highly needed work by defining consistent and achievable requirements.

vii. In the meantime, it is considered that immediate intervention is required in the following areas :

1. Insurance

It is probable that , within the following days, excess third party war/terrorism liability cover will be withdrawn , partly or wholly , with immediate effect. In this case, government intervention will be needed in order to provide to the airlines guarantees for insurance cover. It should be considered that such cover would need to be free of charge at least for an initial time period.

2. Security costs

Enhanced anti-terrorist security measures have already been implemented by the European airports and airlines. There are direct and indirect costs resulting from these measures. Member States could consider absorbing these costs (wholly or partly) based on an objective assessment and taking into account the need for a level –playing field in air transport.

3. Slots

Network structure will be influenced by the military operations in Iraq and closure of airspace as well as by the anticipated sharp decline in demand. Airlines are reducing their capacity. In this respect, the temporary suspension of Article 10 of the EU Slot Regulation (‘use it or lose it’ principle) should be considered.

4. Other means of Support

In the aftermath of September 11th, the U.S. aviation sector was provided with direct and /or indirect aid by the U.S. and federal governments. The issue of the distortion of competition at certain markets was raised.

In case that similar action is taken by the U.S. government and in order to prevent distortion of competition and keep a level –playing field in the international aviation sector, it is considered that measures of support should also be taken for the European aviation sector.

These supportive measures should take into consideration transparent cost analyses based on thorough, detailed and objective assessment of the operational, commercial and financial implications of the conflict.

In any case, since the military operations in the Middle East will have a far greater effect on European air –transport, it is imperative that specific measures of support, such as loan guarantees for instance, should be examined, especially for markets being in close proximity to the region.

viii. It goes without saying that if military operations are considerably prolonged , long –term measures should be developed by the member –states.

ix. Finally, the Hellenic Presidency proposes that the Transport Council of the 27th of March adopts Council Conclusions that will allow the Member –States to handle this difficult situation by taking the necessary measures as mentioned above.