

## DECLARATION

Adopted by the Association of European Airlines Presidents' Assembly, The Hague, Netherlands  
14<sup>th</sup> November 2008

The European network airline industry stands at a watershed.

Its reputation is built on technical excellence, quality of service and value for money. In the 17 years since liberalisation it has relentlessly pursued efficiency, which has been passed on to its customers in the form of lower fares.

In the process it has established itself as a key element of European infrastructure, providing European citizens with mobility and amenity, providing European business with access to ever more diverse markets, and building European cohesion by linking Europe's regions to each other and to the world. In this respect it has played a particularly significant role in the successive and successful enlargements of the Community, while remote and peripheral regions are wholly dependent on air transport.

These achievements have been rewarded with growth, although not with financial prosperity. The industry's growth has highlighted its environmental responsibilities. Its financial performance has left it, and its workforce of more than 400,000, vulnerable to the ravaging effects of the current economic crisis.

**The Presidents' Assembly of the Association of European Airlines remains committed to reducing the industry's impact on climate change** through support for and investment in new technologies, and through the identification, development and adoption of best practice in its day to day operations.

**The Presidents' Assembly recognises the potential value of an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to manage environmental impact but it will only function efficiently if it is implemented globally.** Nevertheless, AEA supports European leadership in this area if – and only if – the inevitable distortions of a scheme which impacts disproportionately on the airlines of a single region are kept to an absolute minimum.

**The Presidents' Assembly deplores political moves to significantly worsen the already burdensome conditions imposed on the industry by the ETS Package agreed between the European Parliament and Council in June 2008, for implementation in 2012.** Since no proper assessment was made of the likely impact of these measures, on the industry or on the environment, it is imperative that no further stringency is incorporated into the Scheme before it is properly tested and evaluated in practice.

**The Presidents' Assembly insists that the single biggest reduction of unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions will be achieved through the realisation of the Single European Sky.** The rationalisation of air traffic management in Europe can enable airlines to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Europe by 16 million tonnes annually. The Single Sky will also benefit airlines and their customers through the elimination of large-scale inefficiency and delay.

**The Presidents' Assembly is dismayed by the proliferation of taxes imposed on its customers** which, although they are clearly designed to raise revenues, are misleadingly presented as environmental in their justification.

In consequence, and in light of the pressing need for the industry to re-establish stability and predictability in the current economic climate, **the Presidents' Assembly calls for:**

- No further worsening of the parameters of ETS before the scheme has been properly evaluated in practice, and specifically exemption for aviation from the review of the General ETS Directive which will take place before the aviation scheme has even been introduced;
- The implementation of the Single European Sky, without dilution or political intransigence, such that the environmental disbenefits of the current system are substantially eliminated before the introduction of aviation ETS in 2012;
- An absolute guarantee that European airlines will not be required to buy permits to operate routes in competition with third-country airlines not covered by the Scheme;
- A concerted effort by the EU institutions to promote a global scheme which will avoid competitive distortions, protect European jobs and European competitiveness, and deliver measurable rather than illusory environmental benefits;
- An end to the proliferation of 'environmental' taxes on airline customers and the withdrawal of such taxes, where they already exist, upon the implementation of ETS.