

European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From: Sir William Cash MP

19 July 2021

Robert Courts MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Department for Transport

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COM(20)558 & COM(20)579: Community Airport Slot Allocation and the Single European Sky

The Committee has asked me to thank you for your Explanatory Memoranda (EM) on the above listed documents.

Following completion of the post-Brexit transition period – as per the UK/EU Withdrawal Agreement – and the subsequent entering into force of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), the Committee would appreciate it if you could provide further information on the following points:

Airport Slot Allocation

- Following completion of the post-Brexit transition period, the UK is no longer bound by the EU's rules on airport slot allocation including with respect to waivers granted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. While the Government matched the EU by extending a waiver on UK airports for the 2021 summer season, could you please provide the Committee with further information on the Government's current plans for the potential further waiving of airport slot allocations in advance of the 2021 winter season?

Single European Sky

- **EUROCONTROL** - The Commission is proposing a number of new oversight roles for EUROCONTROL as Network Manager of the SES. Despite no longer being an EU Member State, the UK continues to be a contractor of EUROCONTROL in its own right and, as such, should be able to continue to receive its services that help ensure the safe and efficient flow of air traffic through UK airspace. Could you please provide us with further information on how the Government will ensure that this is the case and outline how doing so relates to wider aviation services and aviation safety provisions detailed in the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement?
- **Market conditions for air navigation services** – the Commission is seeking to encourage greater competition for some supporting air navigation services such as provision of data and weather information, and while the Government is supportive of liberalising this market, the current proposal is restricted to providers who have their principal place of business in the EU and have more than 50% ownership by EU Member States or their nationals. This could prevent the UK entering this new market. Could you please provide us with further information on how the Government intends to explore with the Commission and individual EU Member States the possibility of expanding the opportunity to tender to all European countries?
- **Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs)** – the proposed amendments to the SES Regulations would remove the legal requirement for EU Member States to participate in a FAB but still allow Member States to continue operating FABs where they are deemed beneficial. Given that the UK shares a FAB with the Republic of Ireland, could you please provide us with further information on how discussions between the Government and counterparts in Ireland are progressing regarding the future operation of the UK/Republic of Ireland FAB?

We request a response to this letter by the end of August

I am copying this letter to Lord Kinnoull and Christopher Johnson in the Lords; Huw Merriman MP, Chairman of the Transport Committee; Pete Wishart MP, Chairman of the Scottish Affairs Committee; Stephen Crabb MP, Chairman of the Welsh Affairs Committee; Simon Hoare MP, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee; and Les Saunders at the Cabinet Office; and to Margaret Browne, Departmental Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

CHAIR