



DECARBONIZING AVIATION SECTOR - EUROPEAN UNION INTRODUCES NEW SUSTAINABLE FUEL MANDATES

News / Airlines



The Council and the European Parliament reached a provisional political agreement on a proposal aiming to decarbonise the aviation sector and create a level playing field for a sustainable air transport (ReFuelEU aviation initiative). The proposal aims to increase both demand for and supply of sustainable aviation fuels, while ensuring a level playing field across the EU air transport market. It is a major proposal which aims to put air transport on the trajectory of the EU's climate targets for 2030 and 2050, as SAF are one of the key short- and medium-term tools for decarbonising aviation. It should provide a way out of the situation which is hindering their development: low supply and prices that are still much higher than fossil fuels.

Main aspects of the Commission proposal retained

The text of the provisional agreement retains the core aspects of the Commission's proposal, including the extent to which it contributes to meeting climate targets. Key elements of the agreement include:

- The obligation for aviation fuel suppliers to ensure that all fuel made available to aircraft operators at EU airports contains a minimum share of SAF from 2025 and, from 2030, a minimum share of synthetic fuels, with both shares increasing progressively until 2050
- The establishment of a transitional period allowing fuel suppliers to reach the SAF blending mandate as a weighted average of the quantities they have supplied across the Union, in order to facilitate the organisation of the sector during its creation phase, without affecting the overall level of emissions
- The obligation for aircraft operators to ensure that the yearly quantity of aviation fuel uplifted at a given EU airport is at least 90% of the yearly aviation fuel required, to avoid emissions related to extra weight caused by tankering practices
- Reporting obligations for fuel suppliers and aircraft operators
- Rules on the competent authorities, to be designated by the member states to enforce this regulation, and rules on fines

Main amendments to the Commission's proposal

The text of the provisional agreement amends, however, some aspects of the Commission's proposal, with a view to facilitating and accelerating the development of SAF, in particular:

- The extension of the scope regarding Union airports and aircraft operators
- The extension of the scope of eligible sustainable aviation fuels and synthetic aviation fuels. For biofuels, the scope is extended to other certified biofuels complying with the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) sustainability and emissions saving criteria, up to a maximum of 70%, with the exception of biofuels from food and feed crops and the addition of two fuels (hydrogen and synthetic low-carbon aviation fuels), which can be used to reach the minimum shares in the respective part of the regulation
- The introduction of the possibility for the competent authorities of the member states to grant an exemption from the tankering provisions for certain flights in the event of serious and recurrent operational difficulties or structural difficulties in the supply of fuel in accordance with identified criteria
- The promotion of hydrogen at the Union airports
- The creation of a Union labelling scheme about environmental performance for aircraft operators using SAF will help consumers make informed choices and will promote greener flights
- Data collection and the reporting obligations have been reinforced to monitor the effects of this regulation on the competitiveness of EU operators and platforms, and to improve knowledge of the non-CO₂ effects of air transport emissions
- New considerations that the Commission is expected to include in its report in 2027, such as the impact of this regulation on connectivity, on carbon leakage and distortions of competition, and on the future use of hydrogen and electricity.

Next steps

The provisional political agreement is now subject to formal approval by the two co-legislators. On the Council's side, the Swedish presidency intends to submit the text to the member states' representatives (Coreper) as soon as possible with a view to its formal adoption by one of the upcoming Councils.

ReFuelEU aviation and FuelEU maritime explained



The European Union's proposed regulations ReFuelEU aviation and FuelEU maritime aim to increase the use of sustainable fuels by aircraft and ships and, consequently, reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from these transport sectors.

Why these regulations are needed

Aviation and maritime transport account for 14.4% and 13.5% of EU transport emissions, respectively.



EU transport emissions (based on latest available data from 2018)

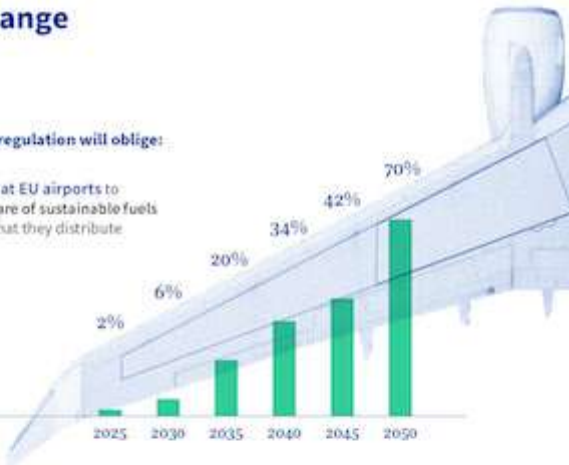
What will change



The ReFuelEU aviation regulation will oblige:

1. aircraft fuel suppliers at EU airports to gradually increase the share of sustainable fuels (notably synthetic fuels) that they distribute

Minimum share of supply of sustainable aviation fuels (in %)



2. airlines departing from EU airports to refuel aircraft only with the fuel necessary for the flight to avoid emissions related to extra weight caused by tankering practices (carrying extra fuel to avoid refuelling at a destination airport where fuel is more expensive)



3. EU airports to guarantee the necessary infrastructure to deliver, store and refuel with sustainable aviation fuels



In addition, a Union labelling system about environmental performance for aircraft operators using sustainable fuels will help consumers make informed choices and will promote greener flights.



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