



Department
for Transport

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From the Parliamentary
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Dear Katherine,

Thank you for your letters of 21 April to Patrick McLoughlin and Ed Davey about emissions from international and EU aviation. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this issue.

The UK is committed to ensuring that the aviation sector makes a significant and cost-effective contribution towards reducing global emissions. Given the international nature of aviation, the UK believes that action at the global level is the best means of tackling aviation emissions. Consequently, we are working hard through ICAO to try to secure agreement on a global market-based measure (GMBM) to reduce aviation emissions. In the meantime – until effective action is taken globally – the UK supports the use of regional measures, in particular the EU Emissions Trading System.

Officials are heavily involved in ICAO discussions on the GMBM, and also attended the recent Global Aviation Dialogue (GLAD) in Madrid on 27-28 April. DfT officials coordinate with their colleagues in DECC, as well as other Government departments, to develop our positions for ICAO's Environment Advisory Group (EAG) and for the detailed technical discussions taking place in ICAO's Global Market-Based Measure Technical Task Force (GMTF). The UK also collaborates closely with other European countries and the European Commission to agree common European positions for the GMBM discussions.

Our priority for the GMBM negotiations is to secure broad agreement at the 2016 ICAO Assembly on a measure that is environmentally robust, respects the principle of non-discrimination and is as administratively simple as possible. We are working hard to ensure that the future GMBM achieves ICAO's aspirational goal of carbon-neutral growth for international aviation from 2020 and contributes to the wider climate objective to keep average global temperature increases to within 2°C.

Although there are likely to be long, and possibly difficult, negotiations ahead, we are doing our best to try to achieve consensus in ICAO to ensure that a global agreement on an environmentally effective GMBM can be reached at the 2016 Assembly.

In UNFCCC, we recognise the need to ensure international aviation and international shipping are included in the overall climate change efforts to limit warming to below 2°C but we are clear that responsibility for addressing the emissions of these global industries lies with ICAO and the IMO respectively.

On emissions standards for aircraft, the UK is the co-rapporteur of the ICAO working group undertaking this work and has also invested in substantial technical analysis to support the process, which should lead to an ICAO decision in February. Initial regulatory levels have yet to be agreed, but will need to take account of the high commercial impact on some manufacturers that will run in to many billions of US dollars (the unit ICAO uses). The manufacturers of those aircraft just meeting the standard will also be expected to endeavour to incorporate new technology to increase that margin in anticipation of a future stringency increase.

Your letter also raised some issues outside of ICAO's remit – financial support to the aviation industry and the Single European Sky (SES).

The UK believes that it is for airport operators and airlines to determine and fund airport operations and air services respectively and therefore airports and airlines in general should not receive subsidies to support operations. However, the UK also recognises that aviation plays an important role in connecting peripheral and development regions and therefore financial support may be necessary where local economic conditions cannot support basic airport and airline services.

Lastly, the UK continues to support the European Commission's Single European Sky (SES) initiative due to its considerable potential to deliver benefits to passengers and to the environment. The UK, with our Functional Airspace Block partner Ireland, have produced a performance plan for the next five years setting out actions we will take to improve the efficiency of our air navigation services in a number of areas including their environmental contribution. This has been assessed as consistent with EU level targets by the European Commission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Goodwill', is written over a faint, larger signature that is partially obscured.

ROBERT GOODWILL