

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
CLIMATE ACTION

The Director-General

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AEF, Amigos de la Tierra Espana,
Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz
Deutschland, Carbon Market Watch,
Climate Concept Foundation,
INSPRO, Greenpeace, Legambiente,
LINGO, Levego Munkacsoport –
Clean Air Action Group, N&E,
Oxfam, Quercus, RAC-F, T&E, WWF
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Dear Sirs,

On behalf of Commissioner Arias Cañete, I would wish to thank you for your joint letter letter, dated 22 April 2015, related to the fight against climate change and the aviation sector.

The rapid growth of GHG emissions associated with air traffic in the years and decades to come is a reality that, if not adequately tackled, would undermine mitigation efforts achieved in other sectors. As we all know, and along with all other sectors, the aviation sector also needs to contribute its fair share to limit global temperature increase below 2° degree. Since many years, the EU has consistently urged for further action, notably at global level. It has also decided to cover aviation activities in the EU ETS since 2012 and has since been advocating the adoption of adequate measures at the global level and, in particular, the adoption of a global market-based mechanism (GMBM) in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

In the context of ongoing negotiations for a GMBM in ICAO, the EU is making it clear that GMBM should achieve carbon-neutral growth as from 2020. While the EU initially lodged a reservation against this objective as not ambitious enough, we work on that basis now and want to ensure that it is safely met, as a first step in the right direction, to be reviewed over time.

In the same vein, the EU is arguing in support of robust monitoring, reporting and verification rules, as a cornerstone of an effective system that would also guarantee a level playing field among operators, as well as for high quality criteria for the eligibility of units to be used in the GMBM. Only solid and robust rules will allow the emission reduction objective to be secured.

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These objectives are supported by the EU and its represented MS in the various meetings organised on the GMBM, be them of a technical, policy or informative nature. I fully concur with you that it is essential to ensure EU unity in these negotiations. The Commission is working hard to ensure this, notably through an active and central role in the development of EU position papers.

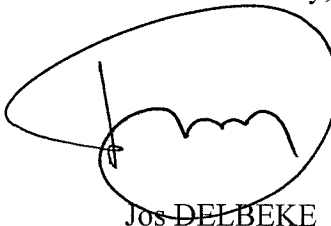
As we know, the process ahead is challenging, not least in view of the short time available ahead of the next ICAO General Assembly. The EU will continue to play an active and constructive role, guided by the objective of achieving an effective and credible outcome next year, with a view to have a GMBM operational from 2020 as planned.

Finally, let me also bridge this process with preparations for the conference in Paris. The Commission, as reflected in the Communication "The Paris Protocol – A blueprint for tackling global climate change beyond 2020 (SWD(2015) 17 final) is convinced that international aviation and maritime should also be addressed in the new international framework, complementary to actions and measures to be delivered by the relevant international organisations, ICAO in this case. The Paris Protocol should become the foundation of a new international framework that should put the world on track towards the below 2°C objective, and it is clear that all sectors of the economy, including international transport, have a role to play and must contribute to it.

As you know, the Commission is expected to report back on the outcome of ICAO General Assembly next year and to come up, as appropriate, with a legislative proposal reviewing the EU ETS. Let me underline at this juncture that, as demonstrated by the last compliance reports, the EU ETS is market with a very high level of compliance, which testifies that it works effectively and delivers in terms of emission reductions. This is an important message to our international partners, at a time where some are starting to implement or to consider similar schemes for their domestic aviation.

I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude to you for your constant support in promoting action against climate change at all levels, and look forward to continuing cooperating with you on this particular field, notably in view of next year discussions.

Yours sincerely,



Jos DELBEKE