

Deal reached on curbing airlines' CO2 emissions

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A Boeing 737 airplane takes off from a runway at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Virginia, September 23, 2013

The UN aviation body has reached a deal on curbing the airline industry's rising carbon emissions, sources close to the negotiations said Friday.

The International Civil Aviation Organization must still hammer out several details of the accord that would take effect in 2020, but the most contentious issues have been resolved.

"The good news is having concluded a general agreement that includes China and India," a diplomat involved in the negotiations told AFP.

The diplomat was speaking as the ICAO's full assembly of 1,400 delegates representing 170 members states met behind closed doors in Montreal to vote on the executive committee's resolution.

China and India had joined the United States in balking at a European Union push for a carbon levy on flights within three years similar to its own recent arrangement.

Last year, the EU suspended its CO2 Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) for intercontinental flights, after facing a storm of criticism.

Under the EU's ill-fated arrangement, airlines flying in EU airspace were required to buy pollution credits to cover 15 percent of their CO2 [emissions](#) for the entire flight, wherever it originated.

But several nations rejected the scheme that threatened to tip into a trade war.

The agreement now on the table "is a strong message to Europe after it lost three votes on its proposals," a negotiator said.

According to the text of the [agreement](#) submitted for consideration at the ICAO meeting, countries must agree by 2016 on a global market-based mechanism and reject all regional schemes, according to the negotiator.

The European Union would thus have to abandon its ETS and adhere to the new global system for curbing greenhouse gases linked to global warming.

Even so, European Commission Vice President Siim Kallas said on Twitter that "Europe has achieved many good results" in the [negotiations](#)

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"If confirmed today, we'll have a landmark deal on global aviation emissions," he said in praising the "good deal."

European Commissioner for Climate Action Connie Hedegaard meanwhile congratulated the ICAO members for agreeing for the "first time (to) a global way to reduce aviation emissions."

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