

# EU climate chief revives airline carbon tax proposal

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The EU's top climate-change official says Brussels is within its rights to tax airlines for emissions in its airspace

The EU's top climate-change official said Wednesday that Brussels was within its rights to tax airlines for emissions in its airspace, reviving a controversial proposal that drew a storm of criticism.

European Union Climate Commissioner Connie Hedegaard said all

[airlines](#) using the [airspace](#) of the European Economic Area could be subject to a tax for their air-polluting carbon [emissions](#).

The idea is essentially the same as the ill-fated CO2 Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) that the EU suspended last year after a flurry of protest from emerging countries, airlines and aircraft builders.

"The EU has the sovereign right to regulate aviation in its own airspace," Hedegaard said.

The proposal, which would first have to receive the backing of the EU's 28 member states and the European Parliament, risks reigniting the standoff between the EU and countries such as China, India and Russia that do not want the tax imposed on their airlines.

The EU has been looking for a compromise solution on airline emissions since being pressured into scrapping an initial proposal to tax airlines for the full flight path of any plane departing from or arriving in Europe.

Hedegaard's new comments came after the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) agreed earlier this month in Montreal to regulate the industry's greenhouse gas emissions but gave itself until 2020 to work out the details.

Asked if her proposal risked raising an outcry after the Montreal deal, Hedegaard replied: "Every country that respects the rule of law will recognise that we have the right to take the measures we want in our airspace."

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