

EU sticks to airline carbon rules despite UN opposition

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A plane of German airliner Air Berlin flies over a house on October 21 in Flörsheim near Frankfurt, Germany. The European Union refused Thursday to drop plans to charge all airlines for carbon emissions when flying to and from Europe despite opposition from the UN's civil aviation body.

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The International Civil Aviation Organization adopted a working paper, backed by the United States, China, Japan and Russia, urging the EU to exempt foreign carriers from rules that are due to come into force on January 1.

"It is disappointing that ICAO discussions once again focus on what states should not do instead of what they should do to curb growing aviation emissions," EU climate action commissioner Connie Hedegaard said.

"However, this decision will affect neither the EU's commitment to working within ICAO to agree on a global solution nor our adopted legislation," she said.

The EU is already fighting in court to defend its decision to include airlines in its Emissions Trading System (ETS) after US companies argued that the rules violate international climate change and aviation agreements.

The [carbon trading](#) scheme is used to charge industries such as [oil refineries](#), power stations and steel works for [CO2 emissions](#) as part of Europe's efforts against climate change.

The dispute is threatening to turn into a trade row, after China reportedly retaliated in June by blocking an order by Hong Kong Airlines for billions of euros worth of Airbus aircraft.

The US House of Representatives weighed in last month, passing a bill directing the US government to forbid US carriers to take part "in any [emissions trading scheme](#) unilaterally established by the European Union."

The ICAO document, presented by 26 of the organization's 36 members

on Wednesday, states that the EU scheme "violates the cardinal principle of state sovereignty" by charging airlines for emissions released outside the 27-nation bloc.

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