

Britain must obey EU environment rules for post-Brexit air deal: campaigners

13 December 2017, by Danny Kemp



As part of the European aviation area, Britain's industry has soared, with low-cost EasyJet battling with the UK's historic carrier British Airways.

The EU must make Britain's air industry sign up to the bloc's environment rules if it wants to keep access to European skies after Brexit, a campaign group warned in a report Wednesday.

Airlines should stay in the EU's [emissions trading scheme](#) and follow rules against subsidies to prevent Britain becoming a "carbon haven", Brussels-based group Transport and Environment said in the report seen by AFP.

The group—which has had meetings with EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier's task force—warned that without a deal British planes could be unable to land in the bloc the day after the UK leaves.

"As London works out its future relationship with the EU, it should be able to keep its current level of access to Europe's [aviation](#) market by agreeing to maintain EU rules designed to curb flying's environmental impact," said Kristina Wittkopp, legal analyst at Transport and Environment (T&E) who wrote the report.

The publication of the report comes on the eve of a European Union summit at which leaders are expected to approve the opening of talks on a future relationship with Britain, including on a trade deal.

T&E said Britain should stay in the European Common Aviation Area—which allows planes from EU states and some neighbouring countries to operate anywhere within the bloc—even though it would mean overriding London's Brexit "red line" of being free from EU law.

British Brexit Minister David Davis said on Sunday that he wanted a Canada-style arrangement between Britain and the EU, with "individual specific arrangements" for sectors including aviation.

As part of the aviation area, Britain's industry has soared, with low-cost EasyJet battling with the UK's historic carrier British Airways.

Outside the area, Britain's airline industry could be forced to set up new bases within EU territory. Without a Brexit deal it would not be allowed to fly there at all.

'Carbon haven'

But the group said that if Britain does want to stay in the aviation area, the EU should make it a condition that it also remains in the EU's emissions trading scheme (ETS), which is aimed at reducing the impact of global warming.

Under the scheme, carbon producers buy allowances to offset what they emit—currently at seven euros (\$8.2) per tonne of carbon dioxide—funds from which are put back into measures to tackle climate change.

"Any deal must ensure the UK does not quit the aviation ETS so that these airlines' flights between the UK and Europe will still be required to purchase

allowances," the report said.

Britain should also remain subject to EU state aid rules, which prevent governments giving subsidies to companies, as giving handouts to British airports and airlines would "distort competition and harm the environment by spurring a growth in traffic."

"To prevent Britain becoming a 'carbon haven' for the aviation sector post-Brexit, it is essential that EU state-aid rules continue to apply to the UK," the report said.

It added that Britain should also become a paying, non-voting member of the European Aviation Safety Agency, which sets standards for safety and maintenance across the bloc, Transport and Environment added.

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