

# Questionnaire

## *Concerning a Directive on Airport Charges*

### Introduction

Airport charges are an important issue between air carriers, which have to pay for them, and the airports which in most instances levy the charges. The applied charging systems, the levels of the charges and the quality of service provided in return, are points of perennial contention between the main actors.

Airport charges are normally established and levied in accordance with a set of principles and criteria which make up an airport charging system. These systems are determined and governed by public national or local authorities at national level. Airport charges systems differ considerably between the Member States.

In the airport sector no common charging mechanism is in place. A proposal for a common charging Directive was proposed in 1997<sup>1</sup>, but was rejected due to various reasons. Recently, the Commission had extensive consultation with the industry. The Commission has now identified the expedience to come to propose a legislative text on the issue of airport charges and consultation with the industry has shown that some support for this approach exists.

The Unit responsible for Air Transport Policy, Economic Regulation and Multilateral Relations (Unit F1) of the Directorate-General for Energy and Transport (DG TREN) therefore has requested ECORYS to carry out an impact assessment aiming to analyse the impacts of various options that could be considered when regulating airport charges at EU level. The intended charging directive and thus the scope of the impact assessment is limited to the charges that are collected at an airport for the benefit of the airport managing body and paid by airport users ensuring the remuneration for facilities and services which are exclusively provided by the airport and which include terminal use by passengers and freight forwarders, landing, lighting and parking of aircraft. It does not include charges for air navigation (en-route or terminal related) or meteorological services. However, security charges could also be considered to be part of airport charges.

The European Commission has assigned ECORYS to carry out an **impact assessment study** for a Directive on Airport Charges. An important element of the impact assessment is the **stakeholders' consultation** process. In this process relevant stakeholders are asked for their opinion concerning the various options for such a directive. Results of stakeholders' consultation are input in the impact assessment, which is an important contribution for determining the intervention logic and possible consequences of an intervention.

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<sup>1</sup> COM(97)154

You have been approached since we expect that you can provide us with valuable input for our analysis. We would like to emphasize that this is an opportunity to give your opinion and influence the decision making process in this field.

**At the end of 2005, we have also approached you with a questionnaire on airport charges. It must be noted that the current intended Directive for EU regulation has a different scope compared to the ones we consulted you about last year. Therefore, we feel the need to consult you again. Nevertheless, we have removed those questions that were put to you last year already, to avoid that we will be collecting the same information twice.**

We would like to thank you for taking some time to answer a number of questions. The **questionnaire** consists of eight questions, of which the majority is multiple choice. In few cases we also ask for possible additional remarks or explanation.

<b>Please return your questionnaire before 25 August 2006</b>
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## Return address

This questionnaire can be returned

- by e-mail ([Robert.piers@ecorys.com](mailto:Robert.piers@ecorys.com))
- by fax to +31-10-452 3680 for the attention of Robert Piers
- By mail: ECORYS, attn. Robert Piers, P.O. Box 4175, 3006 AD Rotterdam, The Netherlands

## Questions?

In case of questions, please contact Robert Piers (T +31 10 453 8606, E [robert.piers@ecorys.com](mailto:robert.piers@ecorys.com)) or Roelof-Jan Molemaker (T +31 10 453 8604, E [roelof-jan.molemaker@ecorys.com](mailto:roelof-jan.molemaker@ecorys.com)).

## Your Details

Please provide us with your contact details:

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<i>b Unit / Department</i>	Secretariat
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## Introduction

CLECAT was established in 1958 in Brussels, where it represents today 28 national organisations of European multinational, medium and small freight forwarders and Customs agents, thus representing the largest and oldest institution of its kind. Freight forwarders and logistic service providers<sup>2</sup> master the entire supply and value chain on behalf of their clients. Their logistic solutions satisfy both production and consumption, both supply and demand and make sure their expectations are satisfied, ensure that goods move from the point of origin to reach their final destination at the right place, at the right time and in good shape. CLECAT members account for over 90% of airfreight.

### Interest in this Consultation:

As previously stated CLECAT's members are responsible for over 90% of airfreight in the EU and as such have a fundamental interest in airport policy. In instances where airport charges levied on airlines and terminal handling companies are disproportionate or inequitable this has a knock on effect for CLECAT members as this invariably will lead to the rates they are charged being increased. It is in the interests of not only all the parties involved but also for overall European competitiveness that a fair and equitable system for setting airport charges is put in place.

In addition some forwarding companies lease space in airports from the airport authorities and as such are themselves subject to airport charges.

In responding to this questionnaire CLECAT has had to take into account the different systems that are in place across the EU. In some Member States there is less of a problem than in others as a consequence the answers in this questionnaire are designed to provide a balanced view of the situation in the EU as a whole as seen by CLECAT members.

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<sup>2</sup> See official description of « freight-forwarding and logistics services » as adopted by CLECAT & FIATA :  
[http://www.clecat.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=42&Itemid=9](http://www.clecat.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=42&Itemid=9)

## Replies

1. The current systems of airport charges setting in Member States might have disadvantages. Do you agree with the possible disadvantages below? Please tick your answer. What other disadvantages do you identify?

Possible disadvantages of current systems	Agree	Partially agree	Do not Agree	Remark
There are no disadvantages with the current systems			X	
Transparency of costs behind the charges				No Answer is possible. Members were misled because the question is not clear. Is it meant to imply that a lack of transparency or the presence of transparency is a disadvantage?
Lack of user consultation in charge setting process		X		
The current systems of airport charges hampers competition between airports				No Answer: this is a statement, not a question, Members did not know how to react or their reactions could not be interpreted.
Lack of harmonisation and therefore no level playing field for airports	X	X		Some Member Federations agreed totally with this statement and some partially agreed
Limited relation between the costs of the airports and the level of the charges	X	X		Some Member Federations agreed totally with this

Possible disadvantages of current systems	Agree	Partially agree	Do not Agree	Remark
				statement and some partially agreed. Clecat thinks this question is not clear.
The existing national regulations on airport charges does not ensure the cost-efficient operation of airports	X	X		Some Member Federation agreed totally with this statement and some partially agreed, probably in accordance with the efficiency of their national system.
The existing national regulations on airport charges does not incorporate quality of service issues.		X		
The current application of airport charges does not always ensure equal treatment of carriers.	X			
Airport charges are not differentiated according to diverging quality levels.	X			
The current system of airport charges enables airports to 'gold plate' investments in infrastructure.	X			
Airport charges cannot be applied for the pre-financing of new infrastructure (in my country).			X	
The modulation of airport charges in relation to the noise performance of aircraft is not possible currently.		X		
The modulation of airport charges in relation to the NOx performance of aircraft is not possible currently.		X		
Non-aeronautical income must be taken into account when setting the airport charges in all EU countries	X			
Other disadvantages, i.e.: Airports must not entirely operate as profit centres but as public infrastructures serving the (local/regional) community				

2. Several stakeholders in the air transport sector consider that the cost-efficient operation of airports is currently insufficiently addressed in the airport charges system. Can you describe to which

extent cost-efficiency of airports is ensured in the current national system(s) of airport charges setting?

Lack of competition and monopoly position trigger all kinds of avoidable costs, e.g. very high noise levies.

3. The European Commission intends to issue a Directive for a common framework on airport charges. Does the current situation in your opinion call for such an EC intervention? Please explain why.

	tick	Remarks
Yes	X	Level playing field must be guaranteed and there should be a harmonization of rates
No		

4. There are a number of options possible for regulation of airport charges. These options are:

- **Option 1:** No EU action, thus the status-quo remains intact; i.e persistence of variation in the charging systems and their underlying principles in the Member States.
- **Option 2:** Scenario in which the aviation industry actors develop and adopt voluntary EU-wide self-regulatory measures to address the problems perceived by either party i.e. the air carriers and airports, incurred by the lack of agreement and common understanding between the parties on how the main points of contention could be best addressed.
- **Option 3:** Community Legal act establishing a general framework requiring that the way airport charges are determined reflect a number of common principles that airport operators would have to adhere to. Thus, the basic framework for establishing the charges would be decided upon at national level but any such framework, and its application, would have to comply with the common principles as established at Community level. The common principles would i.a. include the following:
  - mandatory consultation,
  - non discrimination in the application of airport charges to ensure equal treatment of air carriers,
  - transparency to users of airport accounts that give an insight into the costs and revenues on an annual basis,

- the requirement that airports have to be demonstrably operated in a cost efficient way to be measured on the basis of economic performance indicators,
- the possibility that airport charges are differentiated according to diverging quality levels,
- the use of airport charges for the pre-financing of infrastructure
- the establishment of a regulatory body at national level that would be responsible for supervising the uniform application of the principles, and for the possibility to appeal
- the possibility that charges are modulated in relation to the environmental performance of aircraft used in terms of NOx emissions and noise performance.

**Option 4:** Community Legal act establishing a legal framework at EU level requiring that airport charges are determined and levied on the basis of one regulatory system that would apply across the EU in a uniform way, establishing a single method of calculation to be defined. This single method could be selected from the various charging mechanisms that exist in the Member States; a combination of (elements of) such charging mechanisms is also possible. This option includes an EU binding target level for cost-efficient operations of airports (where relevant a differentiation for different types of airports is made). This option should include the possible environmental modulation as described under option 3 above.

a. Could you rank the four options according to your preference? (1 = lowest preference, 4 = highest preference)

Members did not submit perfectly identical replies. Option number one was not taken by any of the Members, therefore it is certainly unwanted.

Options 3 and 4 were the most popular. One could conclude that regulation is needed and there is also a reasonable expectation to debate possible measures in a more detailed manner.

b. Could you provide us with your motivation for this ranking?

EU legislation is the best guarantee for level playing field as European Countries differ from one another but one principle above them is advisable as a rule

5. It may be considered to apply option 3 or 4 only to EU airports above a certain threshold (i.e. minimum size), because for example the competitive impact of airport charges at (very) small airports is argued to be negligible. Would you agree with such threshold? If yes, what should that threshold be?

This question appeared to reach too far into detail when compared with the information provided to have a clear preference. It is probably advisable that a thorough discussion on the possible future proposals of the Commission is required.

6. A possibility would be that the directive requires airport operators to modulate the airport charges in relation to the environmental performance of aircraft. However, this might apply only to some airports. Do you agree with the following statements?

Possibilities for environmental modulation	Agree	Partially agree	Do not Agree	Remark
Environmental modulation should be mandatory for NOx		X		
Environmental modulation should be mandatory for noise	X			
Environmental modulation should be mandatory only under certain conditions, e.g. when local air quality limit values are exceeded.		X		Agree for noise but do not agree for air quality
Environmental modulation should be mandatory, specifying a certain minimum rate level. Under certain conditions (e.g. in case of local air quality problems) Member States should be able to increase their rates.	X			

7. We have identified different potential effects of the various options. Can you indicate whether you would agree with the effects for each of the four options *compared to the baseline option* (Option no 1: status quo action). Please provide per option and per effect a rating from 1-5 to which extent you agree with the identified effect below, where **1** represents a full disagreement, and **5** represents a full agreement with the effect identified. (1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

<b>Option:</b>	<b>2: Self-regulatory measures</b>	<b>3: General framework with number of common principles</b>	<b>4: Legal framework at EU level based on one regulatory system</b>
<b>Effects identified:</b>			
Transparency of costs behind the charges	2	3	5
Sufficient user consultation in charge setting process	4	4	3
Level playing field for airport operations	1	3	5
Cost-efficient operation of airports	2	3	4
Sufficient investments thru improved financing	3	4	5
More choice in quality level and subsequent costs	4	4	4
Equal treatment of air carriers	3	4	5
Improved supervision of airports to prevent gold plated investments in new airport infrastructure	3	4	5

<b>Option:</b>	<b>2: Self-regulatory measures</b>	<b>3: General framework with number of common principles</b>	<b>4: Legal framework at EU level based on one regulatory system</b>
<b>Effects identified:</b>			
Airlines will deploy aircraft with less noisy engines	2	3	5
Airlines will deploy aircraft with less polluting engines	2	3	5
Reduced aviation contribution to NOx emissions on a local level	2	3	5
Reduced aviation contribution to NOx emissions on a local level	2	3	5
Airport charges will increase	4	4	4
Passenger demand will decrease	1	1	1

8. Do you have any other remarks / comments?

Effects of options are difficult to predict, because of lack of knowledge about effects of the current situation.  
Many other factors influence the effects

**Thank You Very Much For Your Co-operation!!**