



DET KONGELIGE
SAMFERDSELSDEPARTEMENT

Ministry of Transport and Communications

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«Single European Sky: Towards an innovative ATM network for growth, integration and competitiveness»

First of all, thank you for being given the opportunity to comment on the important initiative of delivering the Single European Sky – now ten years in the making.

As a non-EU member, but still fully committed to the internal market through the EEA Agreement, Norway is a strong supporter of the political mission to ensure the success for the Single European Sky initiative. We fully apply the Single European Sky legislation, including the challenging performance scheme.

Now that a compromise among Member States on a revised legal framework for the Single European Sky is in sight, efforts should be made to mend shortcomings, which prevent us from collectively moving forward. There are tough decisions to be made if indeed we believe to be able to deliver on the promises enshrined in the objectives for the Single European Sky.

Yes, we agree that the current regulatory performance scheme is rigid. But is there really a need for more dynamism and flexibility than what is already available today? The ultimate test of the robustness of the performance scheme is fast approaching with the second reference period being a decisive one for setting the right course. It will be even more frustrating if we are not able to reasonably share the burden, and actually collectively deliver the performance improvements already decided.

Consequently we share the Commission's view on a leaner and more effective compliance assessment towards agreed Union-wide targets. At the same time, the important work being done by the Performance Review Body is given higher appreciation and recognition by enabling the Commission to better act on their advise.

The importance of the technological pillar of the Single European Sky is fully shared and will be an important enabler to accommodate a more sustainable future growth in traffic as well as ensuring improvements to be introduced into the field of ATM/ANS, contributing to reaching the performance targets.

We believe that the current FAB constructions - as of yet anyway - do not deliver much added value. We need them to make a difference as enablers for performance improvements and creating possibilities for cross-border cooperation and integration. Allowing for more flexible industrial partnerships to evolve between air traffic service providers is supported and encouraged as it will assist them in taking the right strategic and managerial decisions to reach their performance targets. However, we must take into account the European states' sovereign and legitimate interests for maintaining capabilities for national security and defence purposes.

In general the Norwegian government supports and believes in competition as a basis for continuous growth and global competitiveness. So also in respect of the so called support air navigation services. These services are already today not protected by designation. Still competition to provide these services is limited as they mostly remain bundled within the organisation designated for air traffic services. Given sufficient lead time, we believe that forced unbundling, creating a better functioning market for these support services, is important to unlock the potential for performance improvements in particular on cost-efficiency. If not forced unbundling, then at least introduce competition for the market through a tendering process based on equitable, non-discriminatory and transparent conditions.

We will continue to follow closely the development of the legislative initiative and thank you for your attention.
