



CPMR
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Regions, SMEs and regional airlines call for a strong and sustainable air connectivity for enhanced socio-economic cohesion across all Europe

Representing the regions, small and medium-sized enterprises, and regional aviation, three prominent European organisations, CPMR (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, ERA (European Regions Airline Association and SME Connect (the network of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises), joined forces today with MEP Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Vice-chair of the TRAN Committee of the European Parliament to address the growing concerns threatening regional connectivity in Europe.

In a collaborative event organised in the European Parliament under the title 'Is air connectivity at risk in Europe? How to combine the decarbonisation of the aviation sector with regional socio-economic development', speakers and participants addressed regional air connectivity as a driver for social and economic cohesion for regions and its potential – thanks to the deployment of new technologies – to decarbonise the aviation sector whilst providing a strong connectivity across Europe.

MEP Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Vice Chair of the TRAN Committee, said: *“The aviation industry faces a major challenge. The decarbonisation of the sector, in times of geopolitical and health crises, reveals the urgency to work together so that the sector rises back sustainable and future-proof. Climate protection and delivering on the European Green Deal and the Fit for 55 package are on top of the list. But as co-legislators, we also have to take into account the geographical diversity and different conditions of the Union’s regions and resolve potential connectivity issues appropriately”.*

This important discussion takes place at a key moment, both in the wake of the COVID-crisis and during the interinstitutional negotiations on the aviation-related files of the Fit for 55 package and revision of key Regulations by the European Commission. The event equally aimed to touch upon the trilogues for aviation-related proposals of the Fit for 55 package and the need for a dedicated regulatory framework that does not impact regional aviation and the regions relying on aviation disproportionately.

Air transport is a crucial component of regional economic and social ecosystems. The connectivity it provides is critical for many regions, by not only contributing to economic growth, ensuring access to the Internal Market, and supporting cohesion, but also by ensuring a vital – and often only available – mode of transportation to residents to peripheral, islands, outermost and sparsely populated regions. The EU regulatory framework should preserve and enhance regional connectivity, whilst providing a sustainable aviation leaving no region behind.

In this respect, regional aviation will lead the industry in operating environmentally friendly solutions, as they can operate smaller aircraft – the front runners in technological developments. These segments will be the first ones to which zero-carbon technologies can be applied, therefore offering citizens a sustainable transport mode alongside continued connectivity. An unparalleled potential that should be fully harnessed to protect the future of European aviation and ensure a sustainable regional connectivity to the regions, their businesses, and their citizens.

ENDS



Note to editors:

Aviation related-files of the Fit for 55 package: ReFuelEU Aviation and the European and EU Emissions Trading System for aviation.

Key Regulations under revision: Air Services Regulation and Common rules on the allocation of slots at EU airports Regulation.

About the CPMR

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) represents more than 150 regional authorities from 24 countries across Europe and beyond. Organised in 6 geographical commissions, the CPMR works to ensure that a balanced territorial development is at the heart of the European Union and its policies. Regions are legitimate actors at European level, with competences and expertise in the CPMR's core areas of work: cohesion policy, transport, maritime and fisheries, climate and energy, and migration. The CPMR produces policy positions based on input from its member regions on the areas above, as well as numerous studies, analyses, and technical papers to support them.

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About the European Regions Airline Association (ERA)

Founded in 1980, European Regions Airline Association (ERA) is a non-profit trade association representing over 55 airlines plus around 150 other companies involved in European air transport, and is the only association that bring together the entire spectrum of companies involved in European aviation. The association supports and defends the airline industry in providing safe, efficient and sustainable air connectivity to all regions of Europe. By lobbying European regulatory bodies on policy matters, ERA promotes and protects social responsibility, environmental sustainability and the development of regional economies and local communities.

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About SME Connect

[SME Connect](#) is a large network and a platform for SMEs and their supporters seeking to maximise the impact of Small and Medium-sized businesses on both the European and national level. At the same time, SME Connect is actively engaged in promoting entrepreneurship in Europe and making sure this objective is highlighted in the policies as an area of focus. SME Connect is non-political but advised by a non-profit board of politicians made up of all constructive political groups.

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