
ERA welcomes regulatory decisions waiving slot rules but insists more must be done on EU261 and crew training certificates

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ERA is pleased that regulators have considered the current burden on airlines and have temporarily waived the much-criticised 80% slot rule during these exceptional circumstances.

The proposed temporary suspension of airport slot rules will allow airlines to respond to market conditions with appropriate capacity levels without the risk of losing vital take-off and landing privileges in the future.

Given the unprecedented situation we are experiencing in aviation due to COVID-19, the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has also shared that COVID-19 will be viewed as 'extraordinary circumstances' in instances where disruption has been directly caused by government (advising against all travel, or all but essential travel) or the activities of regulatory authorities or other third parties (for example closing airspace to the airline), and therefore the fixed sum compensation would not be payable. ERA supports this precedent set by the UK in regard to Regulation 261/2004 and continues to urge DG MOVE to follow suit and consider providing an emergency, time-limited force majeure alleviation from passenger compensation.

The association has also requested that EASA temporarily extend the validity of all pilot, cabin crew and engineering proficiency and recurrent training items. Aircraft checks and training are undertaken across the industry by a relatively small group of individuals, and as employee absence levels increase – due to both infection and quarantine – an exponential effect will be seen on the operator's ability to conduct the training.

ERA Director General, Montserrat Barriga, says: "The COVID-19 crisis is having an enormous impact on the aviation industry, much more than initially anticipated, and it may be a burden not possible to overcome for some regional airlines as is demonstrated by the recent collapse of the European regional aviation industry's biggest airline Flybe, which cited the virus as the final burden in its demise. Whilst we welcome the temporary suspension of airport slot rules and support the decision made by the UK, more must be done to mitigate the huge financial burden for airlines

by providing more specific focus to airlines such as financial measures and regulatory alleviations of EU261.”

(ERA)