



## Parliamentary questions

15 June 2016


P-004843-16

Question for written answer  
to the Commission

Rule 130

Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)

► **Subject: Follow-up to Written Question E-002690/2016 — Clarification needed of economic figures as regards the comprehensive cost of the Gibraltar paralysis for the EU**

 Answer(s)

In answer to Written Question **E-002690/2016**, Ms Bulc declared:

'On the basis of a study, which was contracted by the Commission and concluded in December 2005, the annual economic impact of the non-signature of [the EU-Ukraine Common Aviation Area] Agreement is estimated around EUR 400 million'<sup>(1)</sup>.

According to former Commission Vice-President Franco Frattini, the cost of Spain's insistence on excluding Gibraltar from the scope of EU aviation measures is EUR 5 billion a year for the EU<sup>(2)</sup>.

In a report published in November 2011<sup>(3)</sup>, the Commission estimated that the 'total additional cost borne by airlines because of suboptimal cost-efficiency and fragmentation of the European airspace is estimated at some EUR 4 billion per year'. Some suggest that this standstill over Gibraltar started in 2011<sup>(4)</sup>.

1. Can the Commission clarify and provide us with an updated comprehensive figure concerning the yearly economic damage for the EU caused by Spain's issue with Gibraltar Airport?
2. Since which year has the Gibraltar issue been blocking files in the Council, and which air transport files is it blocking?
3. Has the Commission evaluated the cost for EU consumers as a consequence of the deadlock over Gibraltar?

(1) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2016-002690+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en>

(2) <http://www.eunews.it/2016/01/27/gibraltar-eu-apply-law-gain-e5-billion-year/49126>

(3) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0731&from=EN>

(4) <http://www.euractiv.com/section/transport/news/gibraltar-dispute-delays-eu-airspace-reform>



## Parliamentary questions

18 July 2016

P-004843/2016

### Answer given by Ms Bulc on behalf of the Commission

The Commission has no updated figures since the study carried out in December 2005. The delay in the signature of this Agreement is due to the differing positions of Spain and the United Kingdom regarding the formulation contained in the EU-Ukraine aviation Agreement concerning the Gibraltar airport.

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that since 2012 this bilateral difference has been impeding progress in pending legislative proposals in the Council. The aviation files concerned are: the Single European Sky 2+ Package, the Slots Regulation as well as the Air Passengers' Rights Regulation.

The Commission has not undertaken up till now a research about the cost that the Gibraltar issue generates for EU consumers.

Last updated: 19 July 2016

[Legal notice](#)



## Preguntas parlamentarias

4 de abril de 2016

E-002690-16

**Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita a la Comisión**  
**Artículo 130 del Reglamento**  
**Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)**

► **Asunto: Transparencia y divulgación de la información relativa a las negociaciones sobre acuerdos de aviación entre la UE y terceros países —artículo 218 del TFUE— y punto muerto en las negociaciones con Gibraltar**

 Respuesta(s)

Como es de conocimiento de la Comisión, el artículo 218 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea (TFUE) dispone que el Consejo y la Comisión requieren la aprobación del Parlamento para celebrar acuerdos internacionales.

Por otra parte, el Acuerdo marco sobre las relaciones entre el Parlamento y la Comisión establece que el Parlamento debe estar plenamente informado en todas las etapas de la negociación y la conclusión de acuerdos internacionales<sup>(1)(2)</sup>.

En vista de lo expuesto:

¿Puede la Comisión comunicar la última cláusula de competencia leal utilizada en las negociaciones sobre los acuerdos globales de servicios aéreos con la ASEAN y los Estados del Golfo, y en particular los elementos relativos a la transparencia financiera y la divulgación de las cuentas como una condición previa para seguir ampliando el acceso al mercado?

Por lo que se refiere al punto muerto en las negociaciones con Gibraltar:

¿Puede la Comisión informar acerca de si España ha bloqueado o está bloqueando los mandatos de negociación de estos acuerdos de aviación o amenaza con bloquear la firma de los mismos?

¿Puede la Comisión aportar cifras y datos sobre el daño económico causado por la parálisis de las negociaciones con Gibraltar?

(1) <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2011/nov/ep-com-interinstitutional-agreement-2010.pdf>

(2) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0598&from=ES>

Lengua original de la pregunta: **EN**

Última actualización: 19 de abril de 2016

**Aviso jurídico**



EU news and policy  
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# Gibraltar dispute delays EU airspace reform

By EurActiv.com, Reuters  
(updated: 5 dic. 2014)

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New rules to integrate  
European airspace were  
agreed on by the Council.  
[Doug/Flickr]



A British-Spanish territorial dispute over Gibraltar threatened to block implementation of an agreement by European Union member states on Wednesday (3 December) to merge national air corridors to create shorter flight paths and cut costs and carbon dioxide emissions.

The Single European Sky initiative, launched in 2004, would merge corridors into transnational “blocs”. Flights will become shorter and more cost-efficient as the new law improves the management of the air traffic capacity by avoiding detours.

But Spain wants Gibraltar airport excluded from EU aviation law until a dispute about sovereignty over the isthmus, a narrow strip of land connecting Gibraltar to Spain, is resolved.

“The Council has not taken any position on the application of this proposal to Gibraltar airport,” the Council of the European Union, comprised of the EU’s 28 member states, said in a statement.

Ana Pastor Julian, Spain’s minister of public works and transport, described the airport, situated on the isthmus, as “an area which is being illegally occupied by the United Kingdom”.

Britain says that under a 2006 Cordoba agreement between London, Madrid and the Gibraltarian government, Spain agreed to stop seeking the exclusion of Gibraltar airport from EU aviation measures.

“There is absolutely no reason at all for Gibraltar to be excluded from continuing participating in these measures,” said Robert Goodwill, British under secretary of state for transport.

Under the current air corridor system, responsibility for airspace belongs to each country, which usually manages its flight paths and charges navigation and terminal fees, estimated by the Eurocontrol air traffic agency at some €8 billion a year.

Gibraltar, a rocky outcrop off Spain’s southern coast ceded to Britain in 1713, has been an increasing source of diplomatic tension since the current Spanish government took office in 2011.

Spain claims the whole of Gibraltar, but views the isthmus as a distinct question. According to Spanish diplomatic sources, it was not included in the treaty ceding Gibraltar to Britain three centuries ago, so has always been Spanish territory.

The Council agreement will need to be finalised in discussions with the European Parliament next year. However, until the wrangle over Gibraltar’s airport is solved the updated airspace reform proposals cannot be implemented.

## Positions

Commenting after news of the agreement, **Gesine Meisner MEP**, Coordinator on the European Parliament's Transport Committee for the Liberal **ALDE** group, said: "Although the Council position is not a breakthrough, it is great news that this file is progressing. We cannot explain to citizens anymore that airplanes are not flying direct routes from airport A to airport B but zigzag due to the national organisation of air traffic controls. More direct routes would mean less fuel consumption and fewer emissions, which would be beneficial to airlines, consumers and the environment."

**ALDE MEP Matthijs van Miltenburg**, shadow-rapporteur for EU Passenger Rights legislation, said: "I welcome the decision made by the Council today on the European Single Sky. This is a first step towards improving the competitiveness of the aviation sector. Now it is important to use this momentum to move forward in other aviation files, such as passenger rights. On the latter, we urge the Council to come forward with their position as both passengers and air carriers long for clarity on the rules. Passengers need to be able to quickly and easily make use of their rights when their flights are delayed or cancelled, or in cases of lost luggage. Airlines on the other hand need to know which rules they have to comply with in order to offer proper assistance to their customers."

The UK Foreign Secretary, **Philip Hammond** has called Foreign Minister Gentiloni of Italy, which currently holds the EU Presidency, to express Britain's concern about the process for agreeing EU aviation legislation Single European Sky 2 plus (SESII+), which has been delayed because Spain has refused to recognise that Gibraltar must be included in the legislation.

Commenting after the call, the Foreign Secretary said: "I made it clear to Italian Foreign Minister Gentiloni that this legislation cannot progress until the issue of Gibraltar is resolved. I underlined that an important piece of legislation for Member States and industry had been held up by political-point scoring on the part of the Spanish. British sovereignty over Gibraltar is an issue outside the competence of the EU, and a distraction. We are confident that the EU will have no option but to follow its own laws and apply the legislation to Gibraltar."

"Spain is trying to use this EU process to force sovereignty negotiations on Gibraltar. Let there be no doubt. The UK will never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another State against their wishes. Nor will we enter into a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar is not content."

## Background

Under the Single European Sky legislation, national air traffic control organisations should work together in nine regional airspace blocks, or FABs, to increase efficiency, cut costs and reduce emissions.

Functional Airspace Blocs, or FABs, are a cornerstone towards a single airspace that aim to reduce the fragmentation along national borders in air traffic management.

By enabling airplanes to fly straighter lines at better altitudes, FABs are expected to save fuel and reduce delays, bringing an estimated €5 billion in savings annually.

The EU mandated the full implementation of FABs by 4 December 2012.

But delays over its implementation has led the European Commission to launch proceedings against 18 EU member states.

In July this year, it sent formal notice to Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom for failing to comply.

>> **Read:** Brussels loses patience over Single Sky delays



**Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-004843/2016  
a la Comisión**

Artículo 130 del Reglamento

**Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)**

Asunto: Seguimiento de la pregunta escrita E-002690 - Necesidad de aclaración de las cifras económicas en cuanto al coste global para la Unión Europea de la parálisis por la cuestión de Gibraltar

En su respuesta a la pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-002690/2016, la señora Bulc afirmaba lo siguiente:

«Según un estudio encargado por la Comisión y concluido en diciembre de 2005, la incidencia económica anual por no haberse firmado este acuerdo [sobre una zona común de aviación UE-Ucrania] se calcula en aproximadamente 400 millones de euros»<sup>1</sup>.

Según el exvicepresidente de la Comisión Franco Frattini, el coste de la insistencia de España en excluir a Gibraltar del ámbito de aplicación de las medidas en materia de aviación de la Unión asciende a 5 000 millones de euros al año para la Unión<sup>2</sup>.

En un informe publicado en noviembre de 2011<sup>3</sup>, la Comisión calculaba que «la deficiente relación coste-eficacia y la fragmentación del espacio aéreo europeo suponen para las compañías aéreas un coste adicional total de 4 000 millones de euros al año». Hay quienes apuntan que esta situación de punto muerto debido a la cuestión de Gibraltar empezó en 2011<sup>4</sup>.

1. ¿Puede aclarar este asunto la Comisión y facilitar una cifra global actualizada sobre el perjuicio económico anual para la Unión causado por la cuestión de España con el aeropuerto de Gibraltar?
2. ¿Desde qué año la cuestión de Gibraltar ha estado bloqueando expedientes en el Consejo y qué expedientes relacionados con el transporte aéreo está bloqueando?
3. ¿Ha evaluado la Comisión el coste para los consumidores de la Unión como consecuencia de la situación de punto muerto a causa de la cuestión de Gibraltar?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2016-002690+0+DOC+XML+V0//ES>.

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ES  
P-004843/2016  
Respuesta de la Sra. Bulc  
en nombre de la Comisión  
(18.7.2016)

La Comisión no dispone de cifras actualizadas desde el estudio realizado en diciembre de 2005. La demora en la firma de este Acuerdo se debe a las posiciones divergentes de España y del Reino Unido en lo que respecta a la formulación contenida en el Acuerdo de aviación entre la UE y Ucrania sobre el aeropuerto de Gibraltar.

La Comisión desea informar a Su Señoría de que, desde 2012, este desacuerdo bilateral impide avanzar en las propuestas legislativas pendientes en el Consejo. Los expedientes relacionados con el transporte aéreo son los siguientes: el paquete «Cielo Único Europeo II+», el Reglamento sobre franjas horarias y el Reglamento sobre los derechos de los pasajeros del transporte aéreo.

Hasta la fecha, la Comisión no ha llevado a cabo ninguna investigación sobre el coste que genera la cuestión de Gibraltar para los consumidores de la UE.



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