



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 13 June 2017  
(OR. en)

11088/96  
DCL 1

AVIATION 21

## DECLASSIFICATION

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of document:	ST 11088/96 RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED
dated:	6 November 1996
new status:	Public
Subject:	Negotiations between the Community and the United States in the field of air transport

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Delegations will find attached the declassified version of the above document.

The text of this document is identical to the previous version.

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RESTREINT

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**NOTE**

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from:Secretariat General

to:Delegations

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No. prev. doc.:9089/96 AVIATION 14 **RESTREINT**  
Council decision:8415/96 AVIATION 12 **RESTREINT**

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Subject:Negotiations between the Community and the United States in the field of air transport

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The Working Party on Aviation held on 24 October 1996 a preparatory meeting concerning the talks with the US on a Common Aviation Area in Washington on 30-31 October 1996.

A special committee consisting of representatives from Member States will hold a co-ordination meeting in Washington on 29 October 1996 to further prepare the negotiations.

The Chairman referred to the mandate assigned by the Council to the Commission on 25 July 1996 stating that during the first stage of the negotiations only regulatory issues will be discussed.

The Commission representative mentioned that the US counterpart responsible for organizing and leading the conversations on 30-31 October 1996 in Washington is the Department of State.

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Four EU Specific Working Parties created by the Commission have elaborated on the main different issues of the mandate achieving a common position.

The Commission representative recalled the aims of the first stage of the negotiations which will be concentrated on the following four issues:

- explaining the Common Aviation Area concept to the US counterpart,
- demonstrating that the Open Skies -system will lead to a blocked situation,
- creating comparable regulatory conditions for Community and US air carriers before entering into negotiations on traffic rights,
- avoiding any possible misunderstandings from the US counterpart while confirming that an agreement would be signed only at the end of the whole negotiating process and that the objective of the first phase is a report and/or agreed minutes.

There was common understanding that traffic rights were not to be raised during the forthcoming talks.

At the end of the first phase the agreed minutes should be presented to the US counterpart.

Due to the NAFTA agreement, representatives from Canada and Mexico will possibly participate in the negotiations as observers.

Most delegations congratulated the Specific Working Parties for their good work and encouraged the negotiators to be ambitious, patient and positive during the talks in order to achieve the best possible results.

The Netherlands delegation commented that the coming elections in the US could have an effect on the negotiations.

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The Commission representative stated that after the elections there will most likely be a change in the US negotiating team. However he was in favor of starting negotiations as soon as possible.

During the negotiations there will be regular informal briefing meetings with representatives from airlines.

On 31 October, the second day of the negotiations in Washington, a lunch will be organized by the US Department of State. Mr. Claude Chêne, Commission DG VII-C and Mrs. Doreen Keaney, Irish Department of Transport will participate from the EU side.

The Austrian delegation expressed their concern about possible different views between DG VII and DG IV of the Commission on specific issues.

The Commission representative pointed out that EU competition rules are established in the Treaty and it is not the aim of the DG VII to change the competition policy of the Community.

Concerning the scope of the first stage of the negotiations the Commission representative named the issues included in the mandate<sup>(1)</sup> and suggested whether delegations could accept that the safety clause was raised in the first phase as a priority. There was no positive reaction from delegations to this latter suggestion.

The Commission representative concluded saying that it is of reciprocal interest of the negotiators to achieve substantial results at the end of the first stage emphasizing also the importance of giving a signal to the rest of the world as regards the Common Aviation Area.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Doc 8415/96 AVIATION 12 **RESTREINT.**

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