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Subject: Negotiations on air transport market access agreements between the European Community and Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia in the field of air transport
- outcome of the meeting of the Special Committee of 15 January

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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NOTE

from : the Secretariat General

to : Delegations

Council Decision: 10533/96 AVIATION 18 PECOS 141 RESTREINT

Subject : Negotiations on air transport market access agreements between the European Community and Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia in the field of air transport

- outcome of the meeting of the Special Committee of 15 January 1997

On 15 January 1997, the Special Committee, which had been set up to assist the Commission in the negotiations mentioned above, held a preparatory meeting with regard to these negotiations. ⁽¹⁾

The Commission representative presented to the Committee:

- a report on the information meeting which was held between the Community and the Eastern and Central European Countries (CECs) on 16 December 1996;
- a provisional time-table of the bilateral meetings with the CECs that will take place in the first half of 1997;
- the proposed agenda for those bilateral meetings; and
- the procedure envisaged by the Commission with regard to the safety assessment to be carried out. ⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Representatives of Norway and of the Joint Aviation Authorities took part in the meeting as well.

⁽²⁾ See also Working document AVIATION/97/1.

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Concerning the **meeting of 16 December 1996**, the Commission representative pointed out that the CECs had expressed their concern about the multilateral approach envisaged by the Community, while acknowledging the potential need to facilitate the negotiations by grouping CECs being in a comparable economic and regulatory situation.

The Special Committee concluded that the bilateral meetings planned for the first half of 1997 should serve two purposes:

- a fact-finding purpose in order to be able to assess the current economic and regulatory situation of the CECs, while identifying potential problem areas for the negotiations;
- an educational purpose in so far as the objectives and benefits of the multilateral approach, which would ideally result in a common aviation area between the Community and the CECs, would have to be clearly outlined in those negotiations.

With regard to the proposed **agenda for the bilateral meetings**, the Commission representative singled out the following main elements:

- discussion on the existing situation, both in the CECs and in the Community, in particular concerning the market situation, existing bilateral agreements and harmonisation of legislation in the field of air transport;
- general discussion on market access, based on the third package;
- identification of potential problem areas.

The Commission representative also announced that the Commission would prepare information documents on every CEC, which would be used as a starting point for the bilateral meetings. ⁽¹⁾ In this context, he asked delegations to provide accurate information on their bilateral agreements with the CECs as soon as possible.

Concerning the **safety assessment** issue, the Commission representative informed the Special Committee that the Joint Aviation Authorities had been entrusted with the task of carrying out an independent safety assessment of all CECs. In order to ensure the JAA's independence and neutrality, they would not be part of the Commission's delegation in the negotiations.

⁽¹⁾ See the Addendum to Working document AVIATION/97/1, which includes a draft information paper on Lithuania drawn up by the Commission Services.

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Finally, the Commission representative announced that, with a view to the meeting of the Transport Council in June 1997, the Commission will prepare a substantial report on the outcome of the bilateral meetings with the CECs. This report will be accompanied by the report by the Joint Aviation Authorities on the safety assessment.

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