

EN
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Answer given by Mr Hoekstra
on behalf of the European Commission
(31.1.2025)

While non-CO₂ effects from aviation are short-lived pollutant, it is estimated that they warm the climate at least as much as long-lived CO₂ from aviation.

Based on the precautionary principle and in accordance with Article 14(5) of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) Directive¹, the Commission implements a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) mechanism of the non-CO₂ aviation effects. Based on the adopted rules, aircraft operators should monitor the non-CO₂ aviation effects as of 1 January 2025, enabling the calculation of a CO₂ equivalent per flight.

Airlines are required to report non-CO₂ aviation effects annually. In 2025 and 2026, reporting may include all routes but is mandatory only for routes within the European Economic Area (EEA), and routes from EEA departing to Switzerland or to the United-Kingdom. From 2027 onwards, the MRV will extend to all flights departing from or arriving at EEA. The implementation of the MRV and Commission research initiatives enhance knowledge on non-CO₂, informing effective avoidance strategies. Contrail avoidance by flight altitude adjustments is possible². However, open questions need to be solved prior to an operational implementation of contrail avoidance in air traffic management.

In addition to the European measures under the EU ETS, the Commission is ready to work with international partners, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, to take further action on mitigating non-CO₂ in the short-term.

ReFuelEU Aviation and the uptake of SAF (e.g. Power-to-Liquid) could allow to reduce emissions that contribute to non-CO₂ climate impact. The Commission explores ways to improve jet fuel composition in Europe, to reduce aromatics and sulphur levels.

¹ EU ETS Directive <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/87/oj>

² For example: R Sausen et al, 2023, Can we successfully avoid persistent contrails by small altitude adjustments of flights in the real world?: <https://elib.dlr.de/195244/1/avoiding%20contrails%20preprint%20230517.pdf>