

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001487/25
to the Commission
Benoit Cassart (Renew)
(10 April 2025)**

Subject: Accountability for delays to the first flights of the day (first wave and knock-on effects)

Every day, European airlines experience significant delays, owing to a shortage of staff shortages at certain air navigation service providers. The first flights of the day, which are critical to the smooth running of the day's schedule, are particularly common casualties. In 2024, only 79% of first flights departed on time, with a 31% increase in delays caused by air traffic control. These disruptions lead to missed connections, long waits or cancellations for passengers. To ensure that first-wave flights leave on time and to prevent knock-on delays in subsequent rotations, a sufficient number of controllers is needed.

Does the Commission intend to propose binding accountability mechanisms and financial penalties for air navigation service providers if they fail to meet their performance obligations, particularly with regard to first-wave flights?

Submitted: 10.4.2025

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(13 June 2025)**

The regulatory framework governing air traffic management in the EU includes performance and charging schemes for air navigation services and network functions.

As part of those schemes, air traffic service providers are bound to implement binding national performance targets for air traffic control capacity, which is aimed at limiting the number of delays caused by air traffic control in Europe.

Member States must also set out incentives of financial nature for the achievement of those performance targets by the service providers in the key performance area of capacity in an effective and proportional manner, both for services to overflights and for services at and around airports.

The Commission will revise soon the detailed rules governing the performance and charging schemes for the next reference period of the Single European Sky performance and charging scheme starting in 2030 in order to implement the changes introduced by the regulation on the implementation of the Single European Sky (Regulation (EU) 2024/2803 ⁽¹⁾).

At this occasion, the Commission will review the relevance of the indicators used for the setting of performance targets, which may include the need to address specifically services to first-wave flights. The detailed rules governing the setting up of incentive schemes may also be further assessed.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2803/oj/eng>.