

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001864/25
to the Commission
Markus Ferber (PPE), David McAllister (PPE), Stefan Köhler (PPE), Christian Doleschal (PPE)
(8 May 2025)**

Subject: Importance of regional airport infrastructure

Europe's many regional airports enable international exchange and connect citizens, companies and SMEs from all over Europe with the world.

Despite this key role for economic activity, in recent years the financial situation for regional airports has worsened mainly due to extrinsic shocks, such as the COVID-19 crisis, global turbulence in the aviation sector and Russia's war against Ukraine. The financial situation of many regional airports is bleak, threatening their core existence and endangering their important role for societies and regional prosperity.

In this light I would like to ask:

1. Will the Commission, in its evaluation of the aviation state aid guidelines, consider the need for maintaining and modernising Europe's regional airport network, which is not only about mobility, but also about safeguarding jobs and innovation in its industrial sectors?
2. Could the Commission support a framework where state aid rules take into account the long-term industrial and technological strategies of Germany, particularly in relation to decarbonised aviation?
3. How will the Commission assess the need for German regional airports to remain ready to support the rollout of electric aircraft and other innovations that are critical to the competitiveness of Germany's industry?

Submitted: 8.5.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Ribera on behalf of the European Commission
(30 July 2025)**

In its current review of the 2014 guidelines on state aid to airports and airlines (Aviation Guidelines), the Commission has carried out stakeholder consultations ⁽¹⁾ and launched an external support study to be finalised in 2025.

The Commission aims to adopt the new rules before the expiry of the 2014 guidelines. Stakeholders will have the chance to comment on the draft Aviation Guidelines before that date.

The Commission will ensure that the revision considers all relevant EU objectives such as territorial and social cohesion, regional development as well as others (as contained, e.g., in the Clean Industrial Deal).

In that regard, while the Commission acknowledges that regional airports generally may contribute to connectivity, it notes that operating aid is generally one of the most distortive forms of public support, which is why the Aviation Guidelines currently foresee the phase-out of operating aid to regional airports by 3 April 2027.

In the context of the greening of aviation, the Commission will assess, among other things, the potential need for the Aviation Guidelines to include specific measures for the decarbonisation of aviation and reduction of aviation related emissions in addition to the possibilities already offered by the 2022 Guidelines on state aid for climate, environmental protection and energy and by the framework for State Aid measures to support the Clean Industrial Deal.

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_6264.