

EU-US security agreement allows cheaper and faster air cargo operations

Brussels, 1 June 2012 - The European Commission and the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) have agreed to recognise each other's air cargo security regimes from 1 June 2012 on. This recognition will eliminate duplication of security controls and the need to implement different regimes depending on the destination of air cargo. It will substantially cut cargo operators' costs and save time.

"We are getting rid of duplication of security controls, while preserving high levels of security. This is a big step forwards and it will have a major business impact. Air freight is by definition naturally urgent. Cutting out the duplication of security procedures will mean huge savings for cargo operators in terms of time and money." said Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for transport.

The EU-US air cargo market

Air cargo traffic between the EU and the U.S. amounts to over a million tonnes a year travelling each way across the Atlantic. The goods transported by air from the EU to the US alone are worth more than 107 billion euros, which is 27% of the value of all goods exported by air by the EU (2011 figures).

The EU and U.S. are each other's single most important destination for air cargo.

Security costs are an important factor in terms of costs and time for cargo operators, and difficulties to comply with different security requirements have forced carriers to stop carrying certain types of cargo. Depending on the carrier's profile, security measures may account for up to 4% of turnover and the additional cost of duplicate transatlantic measures can account for one-fifth of the security costs. Mutual recognition, by a conservative estimate, saves several tens of millions of euros per year in the EU alone, without any negative impact on security.

The new agreement

Close cooperation between the European Commission and the TSA over the last few months permitted the air cargo security regimes in place in the EU and the U.S. to be compared in detail and to be confirmed as ensuring an equivalent, high level of security. Air carriers transporting cargo from EU airports to the U.S. therefore no longer need to apply different measures, but need to implement in full the EU legal requirements which lay down obligations on the screening of consignments and on a regulated secure supply chain. Both sides also agreed to exchange information on the evolution and the implementation of each other's security regimes, including participation in inspections, in order to ensure continued and full compliance by air cargo operators.

The EU also recognises the U.S. cargo security regime as meeting the recently adopted EU requirements for cargo being flown into the EU from third countries. Therefore, no additional measures are required from air carriers transporting cargo shipments from the U.S. to the EU.

Background

Before the full recognition of the respective air cargo security regimes, air cargo flown into the U.S. had to be submitted to controls defined in security programmes issued by the TSA. This did not take into consideration the extensive controls already applied at EU airports and often required duplication of certain controls or running separate security regimes for U.S. bound cargo in parallel to applying EU rules. The cost for implementing separate regimes could be very high and, in addition, significantly

affected the speed and efficiency of operations for shippers transporting goods to their customers.

For more information see: [MEMO/12/400](#)