

Air Traffic Chaos

Safety more important than profit

With regards to the impact of the volcanic eruption in Iceland on the transport in Europe, **Michael Cramer** and **Eva Lichtenberger**, spokespersons on transport for the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, state:

"Mobility in Europe has changed drastically in the past six days. This time, the reason was not an accident, the fight against climate change or the high prices of kerosene. This time, it was nature itself. The volcano in Iceland has shown mankind once again, how powerful nature is.

This danger must not be underestimated! Therefore, we Greens vehemently condemn the resolve of the airline industry, which puts profit before the safety of passengers and pilots. We demand: The European airspace must only be opened again, when there is definitely no further risk for cockpit personnel or passengers. We ask all politicians to withstand the pressure of the air carriers. The responsibility for the safety must not be transferred to the airlines.

The events of the past few days also clearly show us the mistakes that have been made in European transport politics in the past few decades. It has been - and often still is - a common belief that the railways can be neglected. On the other hand, all attention has gone towards the air traffic. To give just one example, the European airlines are given 14 billion Euros by the European tax payer every year, due to the fact that there is no tax on kerosene. However, the situation is very different for the railways. These and other facts put the temporary loss of profits of the airlines into perspective.

The volcanic eruption in Iceland should be a warning to us all. What we are experiencing now is the implementation of future transport politics. However, this will only be successful if we do not have to implement it over night. Therefore we call upon all member states of the European Union, to set new priorities on the national and international political transport agenda and shift the necessary funds to the railways. Thanks to the additional efforts of the railways, quite a few passengers were taken safely to their destinations in the last few days. This is the only way we will secure mobility in the future and stop climate change!"

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Michael Cramer

Member

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