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[Press release](#) | 12.12.2012

Airports and noise

No takeoff for flawed plans to liberalise airport services but MEPs fail to address concerns on noise

The European Parliament today voted on EU legislation dealing with airports, including noise and ground-handling. The Greens welcomed the vote to reject the proposed liberalisation of ground-handling services but regretted the decision to refer the proposal back to the EP's transport committee. The group is also concerned that the priority given to expanding airport capacity in the proposals on airport restrictions comes at the expense of citizens' interests on noise pollution and the environment, under the 'airport package'. After the vote, Green transport spokesperson **Eva Lichtenberger** stated:

"While MEPs have today voted to ground plans from the EU Commission to liberalise airport ground-handling services, the outcome is tempered by the decision to refer the proposals back to the committee. This rebuff is a relief for workers in the sector, as the proposals to further liberalise ground-handling services risked further undermining social and employment standards. We hope that this position will be upheld when the transport committee again considers the legislation.

"Bad working conditions for ground-handlers undermine the quality of services, with unacceptable consequences on safety and security. Further undermining working conditions is against the interests of both workers and passengers.

"Regrettably the overarching focus of the legislation on airport operation is aimed at boosting airport capacity, which is ultimately at odds with citizens' concerns on noise and its health effects, as well as being bad for the environment. Despite some cosmetic changes, the proposed rules on airport noise still foresee provisions, allowing the EU Commission to intervene to oppose operating restrictions at airports. Airports that want to introduce nighttime flight bans, which are clearly in the interests of local citizens, could be challenged by the Commission. This approach is designed to favour increasing EU airport capacity and comes at the expense of good regional practice for airport noise reduction."

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