

guardian.co.uk

Airlines that break emission rules could have planes seized

Juliette Jowit

The Guardian, Wednesday 4 March 2009

The Environment Agency is to be given powers to seize planes from airlines which break the rules of a new scheme to limit flights' [carbon emissions](#).

The transport secretary, [Geoff Hoon](#), and the [climate change](#) secretary, [Ed Miliband](#), will today announce the government agency's new role, which goes far wider than its regulation of other UK industries.

As the official body to enforce the European Emissions Trading Scheme for aviation, the EA will monitor emissions from flying, police companies' buying of credits when they exceed their allocation, impose fines and, as a last resort, have the power to seize assets of offending airlines. The new authority given to the EA goes beyond its power to enforce the existing trading scheme for power companies and other big industries in the UK, because it is considered harder to enforce fines against airlines with no fixed assets in the UK.

The appointment of the EA, whose chairman Lord Smith has been an outspoken critic of expanding Heathrow, will please environmental campaigners, but they are strongly critical of the Emissions Trading Scheme.

"We trust the Environment Agency, but the ETS falls far, far, short of what's needed to deal with carbon dioxide - the caps are too lenient so it's not going to do the job," said John Stewart, chairman of the Heathrow campaign group HACAN.

Roger Wiltshire, general secretary of the British Air Transport Association, said the EA's new powers were in line with those of airports, which could ground planes if airlines did not pay fees. "It's very rare and mostly historic, so we wouldn't expect this action to be taken," he added.

In his first major speech since giving the go-ahead for a third runway and sixth terminal at Heathrow, Hoon is expected to criticise campaigners opposed to expansion of UK airports, arguing that rising demand would push the price of tickets so high that flying would become "the preserve of the rich".

Yesterday campaigners continued a series of high-profile protests when activists cut through a perimeter fence and disrupted flights at Aberdeen airport, earmarked for expansion by BAA which also owns Heathrow. "It's innovation, perspiration and persuasion that will bring about real and lasting change - not silly stunts," says a draft copy of the speech.

Speaking at a conference in London, the transport secretary will also remain bullish about the long-term forecast for aviation demand in the UK, set to increase from 180 million passengers a year in 2000 to 500 million in 2030.

Ads by Google

PwC's Global CEO Survey

Will climate change be the next global crisis?

pwc.com/ceosurvey/collaboration

Carbon Credit Trading

The World's Next Biggest Market. How To Profit Early: New Report.

www.GreenChipStocks.com/Carbon_Rpt

Discover Private Equity

Learn How One Man Turned \$100K into \$1,500,000,000. Get Free Report!

www.Growthink.com/Private-Equity

guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media Limited 2009