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– Noise protection at Frankfurt Airport: BARIG criticizes the Ministry's seven-point plan

According to the Board of Airline Representatives in Germany (BARIG), the seven-point plan for quieter nights at Frankfurt Airport, which has now been presented by the state of Hesse's Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy, Transport and Regional Development, cannot be implemented in its present form. The main criticism of the representative body of more than 100 German and international airlines is that several points mentioned in the paper will do nothing to counteract the actual problem. Instead, airlines are unilaterally blamed for failures which are not their responsibility and are outside their sphere of influence. The positions of the BARIG on the individual points are as follows:

1. Limit flight movements at peak times

BARIG, like airport operator Fraport, sees the necessity to primarily refrain from increasing the number of flight movements. The infrastructure at Frankfurt Airport and the airspace over Germany must first be further developed before any extension can be considered.

2. Hold airlines accountable for delays

On this point, the Ministry is wrong, according to BARIG. The blame for the recent increase in delays in Frankfurt is not unilaterally attributable to the airlines. The causes are considerably more complex and range from the congested infrastructure on the ground to the crowded airspace over Germany and the BENELUX states, as well as a lack of personnel at system partners. In this respect, the announced extension of the administrative offense procedure against the pilots also of the respective airlines is not correct, particularly since the airlines are in any case affected by any procedures against their pilots.

3. Significant increase in fines

BARIG also strongly rejects this announcement. On the one hand, a quadrupling of the fine imposed would be disproportionate. On the other hand, today's legal situation already allows for higher sanctions. To that extent, there is no need for action.

4. Increase of the noise charges

The planned increase of charges for landings in Frankfurt after 10 pm and, in particular, for delayed landings after 11 pm cannot be meaningfully understood by the airlines which are united in BARIG. Landing after 10 pm is permissible and may not be sanctioned by arbitrarily levied charges. Frankfurt Airport operates in national and international competition. An additional operating restriction resulting from misdirected charges is more than counterproductive, as it would cause severe damage to the entire location.

5. Rearrange aviation security controls at Frankfurt Airport

BARIG expressly welcomes initiatives that speed up and improve airport security without compromising security. In this respect, the airline association also supports in principle the announcement to invest in the acquisition of new security technology and to transfer responsibilities in the organization and execution of these controls to the airport operator in cooperation with the airlines.

6. More staff for the German air traffic control

German Air Traffic Control (DFS) requires more qualified personnel to perform its tasks in certain areas. In return, however, this may not automatically lead to higher fees. Instead, savings that DFS has been able to achieve through downsizing need to be used to build capacity. In doing so, air traffic control has to be made more flexible by the legislator for a cross-sectoral use of air traffic controllers. In addition, decisions must be taken at European level to speed up the exploitation of automation potential.

7. Identify critical flight plan design early

The announcement that in the future all documentations and justifications will be prepared for all planned arrivals from 9:30 pm and also provide circulation plans beyond that is completely unnecessary, according to BARIG. In order to impose sanctions against any systematic delays, authorities and politicians already have sufficiently effective options for action. If this ministry plan were to be implemented, it would result in a massive, unnecessary bureaucracy.

BARIG's Secretary General Michael Hoppe: "The airlines have for many years supported the interests of residents at airports effectively with active and passive noise reduction measures. The airlines are also criticizing the current delays at Germany's largest airport and calling for appropriate measures and targeted capacity control. However, the seven-point paper is not effective in several areas and focuses only one-dimensionally. Here, we urge increased efforts by the state government, especially in the direction of Brussels and the modernization of the airspace management, keyword 'Single European Sky'. The problems cited by the Hessian Ministry are not local but international problems. As a result, their solutions must be massively demanded internationally by the state governments. We are very open to an appropriate dialogue here.

BARIG (www.barig.aero)

The Board of Airline Representatives in Germany (BARIG) is the joint body representing the interests of the national and international airlines which are active in Germany. With more than 100 member airlines, the German BAR is the largest organization of its kind worldwide.