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– BARIG criticizes massive air traffic tax increase: weakening of Germany as an air traffic location, lack of earmarking impedes effective climate protection

Comprehensive study of the massive air traffic tax increase determined by the German federal cabinet quickly reveals that it lacks contribution to climate protection, while at the same time endangering economic and traffic developments in Germany. It even obstructs further rapid investments for example in more emission-friendly aircraft. This criticism is expressed by the Board of Airline Representatives in Germany e.V. (BARIG), the mutual representation of interests of more than 100 airlines operating in Germany, following this week's federal government decisions.

"It is naïve to believe that this air traffic tax increase for passengers will contribute to climate protection," BARIG Secretary General Michael Hoppe states. "Instead, we will experience a weakening of the – already delicate – state of Germany as an air traffic location and even witness an increase in climate damage through other carriers in some areas. Hence, it is very sad that politics is lacking the urgently needed foresight in this respect."

Foreign airports benefit, longer approach routes create additional climate impact

One of the federal government's core concepts is that an increased air traffic tax makes flying less and rail travel more attractive. However, most European and medium haul air traffic routes do not provide any reasonable alternatives for passengers and air cargo, especially not in regard to rail options. The unilateral financial burden on flying means that Germany as an air traffic location loses attractiveness without reducing the fundamental demand for mobility. Consequently, as seen after the introduction of the air traffic tax in 2011, passengers explore other mobility possibilities outside of Germany. This shift of passenger and cargo streams benefits air traffic locations in neighboring European countries, thereby creating an unnecessary additional climate impact because passengers and cargo must now first approach their foreign departure airport via ground infrastructure.

Michael Hoppe explains, "The air traffic tax weakens Germany as an industry location in terms of trade, economy, jobs and mobility without benefiting the environment. Also in view of the currently delicate and subdued economic situation, this strategy of the responsible politicians is alarming."

Air traffic tax revenues are not appropriately used for the specific purpose of climate protection

Air traffic is the only carrier involved in emissions trade. Shortly, the international community of nations will introduce CORSIA, another instrument securing CO₂-neutral

growth worldwide. In the run-up to the decision to massively increase the air traffic tax, BARIG and other industry associations had therefore strongly advocated that politics provide respective incentives for additional investments in climate-friendly technologies. For example, support of the development of alternative fuels such as the "power-to-liquid" procedure seems promising. Billions of euros in previous and future air traffic tax revenues could serve as an investment boost here for example. However, the German government does not seem to use these funds in a targeted manner for climate-efficient measures in the air traffic industry. Instead, the money is used to enable other general cost coverage and to balance deficits. From BARIG's point of view, this is a negligently wasted opportunity to efficiently invest in climate-neutral flying.

BARIG (www.barig.aero)

The Board of Airline Representatives in Germany e.V. (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.