



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport

Directorate E - Aviation

***INFORMAL COMMISSION EXPERT GROUP***  
***THESSALONIKI FORUM OF AIRPORT CHARGES REGULATORS***  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **1. BACKGROUND**

The expert group was set up on 14 May 2014 for the purpose of advising the Commission on the implementation of the Airport Charges Directive and to promote best practices in the economic regulation of airports.

## **2. TASKS**

The group's tasks shall be:

1. to assist the Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport ('DG MOVE') in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives in the field of airport charges and airport economic regulation.
2. to establish cooperation and coordination between the Commission and Member States and stakeholders on questions relating to the implementation of Union legislation, programmes and policies in the field of airport charges and airport economic regulation.
3. to bring about an exchange of experience and good practice in the field of airport charges and airport economic regulation.

## **3. CONSULTATION**

DG MOVE may consult the group on any matter relating to airport charges and airport economic regulation.

## **4. MEMBERSHIP**

1. Members shall be Member States' authorities and other public entities responsible for airport charges regulation.
2. Member States' authorities shall nominate their representatives at the Thessaloniki Forum and shall be responsible for ensuring that their representatives provide a high level of expertise.

## **5. CHAIR**

The group shall be chaired by a representative of DG MOVE.

## **6. OPERATION**

1. The group shall act at the request of DG MOVE, in compliance with the horizontal rules<sup>1</sup>.
2. Meetings of the group shall, in principle, be held on Commission premises or virtually, depending on the circumstances.
3. DG MOVE shall provide secretarial services. Commission officials from other departments with an interest in the proceedings may attend meetings of the group and its sub-groups.
4. In agreement with DG MOVE, the group may, by simple majority of its members, decide that deliberations shall be public.
5. Minutes on the discussion on each point on the agenda and on the opinions delivered by the group shall be meaningful and complete. Minutes shall be drafted by the secretariat under the responsibility of the Chair.
6. The group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus.

## **7. SUB-GROUPS**

The Commission may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by DG MOVE. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the horizontal rules and shall report to the group. They shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.

## **8. INVITED EXPERTS**

DG MOVE may invite experts with specific expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda to take part in the work of the group or sub-groups on an *ad hoc* basis.

## **9. OBSERVERS**

1. Individuals, organisations and public entities other than Member States' authorities may be granted an observer status, in compliance with the horizontal rules, by direct invitation.
2. Organisations and public entities appointed as observers shall nominate their representatives.
3. Observers and their representatives may be permitted by the Chair to take part in the discussions of the group and sub-groups and provide expertise. However, they shall not have voting rights and shall not participate in the formulation of recommendations or advice of the group and sub-groups.

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<sup>1</sup> C(2016) 3301, Article 13.1.

## **10. RULES OF PROCEDURE**

On a proposal by and in agreement with DG MOVE the group shall adopt its rules of procedure by simple majority of its members, on the basis of the standard rules of procedure for expert groups, in compliance with the horizontal rules<sup>2</sup>. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the group's rules of procedure.

## **11. PROFESSIONAL SECRECY AND HANDLING OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION**

The members of the group and their representatives, as well as invited experts and observers, are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy, which by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443<sup>3</sup> and 2015/444<sup>4</sup>. Should they fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

## **12. TRANSPARENCY**

1. The group and sub-groups shall be registered in the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register of expert groups').
2. As regards the group and sub-groups composition, the following data shall be published on the Register of expert groups:
  - (a) the name of Member States' authorities;
  - (b) the name of other public entities, including the name of third countries' authorities;
  - (c) the name of observers.
3. All relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions, shall be made available on the Register of expert groups. In particular, DG MOVE shall publish the agenda and other relevant background documents in due time ahead of the meeting, followed by timely publication of minutes. Exceptions to publication shall only be possible where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001<sup>5</sup>.

## **13. MEETING EXPENSES**

1. Participants in the activities of the group and sub-groups shall not be remunerated for the services they offer.

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<sup>2</sup> See Article 17 of the horizontal rules.

<sup>3</sup> Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41).

<sup>4</sup> Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

<sup>5</sup> These exceptions are intended to protect public security, military affairs, international relations, financial, monetary or economic policy, privacy and integrity of the individual, commercial interests, court proceedings and legal advice, inspections/investigations/audits and the institution's decision-making process.

2. Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the activities of the group and sub-groups shall be reimbursed by the Commission. Reimbursement shall be made in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission and within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

Done in Brussels, on 18 July 2022.