

Report of the meeting with ATAG (Air Transport Action Group)

Participants:

Commission: DG Henrik Hololei (HH), [REDACTED]

ATAG: [REDACTED]

Date:

7 February 2023

[REDACTED] explained that ATAG's work is now focused on the implementation of LTAG, gathering the energy and finance stakeholders close to the aviation challenge, with a focus on SAF. ATAG is in constant contact with banks and MDBs.

ATAG will coordinate industry positions ahead of CAAF/3. Industry will have ambitious asks from CAAF/3, wants a strong SAF goal which will mobilise investment and policy actions in many jurisdictions. ATAG agrees that a metric on emission reductions is necessary, but also wants it translated into a quantitative volumes goal to be able to quantify investment in the numbers of plants.

HH pointed out that SAF is indeed the most important pathway in the implementation of LTAG, especially since for long-haul flights there are no alternatives. One challenge will remain the definition of SAF by different jurisdictions. The industrialisation and incentivisation of SAF production are necessary in order to ramp up and achieve meaningful levels.

ATAG calculated that the SAF industry can generate 14 millions jobs worldwide. [REDACTED] mentioned that the existing offtake agreements are not negligible. Airlines totalling 30% of passenger traffic pledge 10% SAF by 2030. Some flexibility (referred to as book and claim) is needed in order to use the SAF where it is most efficient.

HH mentioned the reputational problem of the industry, and the risks ahead, as traffic picks up strongly. The measures in place globally now are not sufficient to offset this growth in traffic, so emissions will inevitably rise in the short term. Industry will need a better narrative to combat the negative perception.

Aviation is well placed because the sector has mapped its pathways towards decarbonisation. It still remains a hard-to-abate sector though. Hydrogen is clearly needed, regardless if the technology choice will be fuel cells or it will be used for PtL.

The understanding on the impacts and the solutions to reduce non-CO2 emissions has progressed in the last years. It is clear that the most significant problem comes from contrails. Some software solutions, already implemented in other jurisdictions, even at commercial level, are in place. While the scientific understanding should progress, and the error margins will need to be reduced, it is already possible to work on pilot projects to measure and eventually reduce contrails formations. [REDACTED] and HH agree that a non-congested airspace, with proficient ANSPs is the best testbed for progress in this area.

The two parties agreed to maintain connection regularly.