

Press release

The airline industry's climate protection deal

Zurich, 7th October 2016 – myclimate criticises the climate protection deal reached today by the international aviation industry. "The concept of 'climate-neutral growth' from the ICAO CORSIA (Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation) agreement is an enormous missed opportunity. In light of climate change, global emissions goals and the economic situation, the best approach would be to fully offset the 800 million tons of CO₂ that aircraft release into the atmosphere annually. And with 100 billion additional dollars in their pockets, this is something the industry could do", says myclimate Managing Director René Estermann.

At the 39th Triennial ICAO Assembly in Montreal, which will continue until 7 October, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) sold their agreement as a historical global climate protection airline deal. The central point is so-called "climate-neutral growth", which was determined for all airlines. Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that only CO₂ emissions created after 2020 are to be offset. The industry intends to continue releasing the existing annual emissions of around one billion tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere at no cost.

This deal is an enormous missed opportunity. "With consistent low prices for fossil fuels, it would have been the time to send a signal about taking responsibility for climate protection, and it could have happened without any negative effects on the balance sheets", René Estermann says with disappointment. myclimate's scathing conclusion is based on the recently published IATA figures (Factsheet Fuel, June 2016). These figures clearly show that the airlines will save an estimated 100 billion US dollars in operating costs thanks to reduced kerosene prices.

"If one were to invest just over one tenth of this 100 billion-dollar unexpected profit in compensation for the CO₂ emissions created by aircraft, it would have extremely positive effects on the environment and on sustainable development", says René Estermann.

myclimate demands that airline companies around the world take responsibility for the waste that they release into the atmosphere. In light of the huge savings on kerosene, now would be the right time for the airline industry to establish a fee that could be used to correct the damages.

Climate-neutral growth?

myclimate does indeed welcome the airline industry's offer of reduction measures, which are albeit due largely to technological progress and economic considerations. However, the climate-neutral growth starting in 2020 is also being praised as a major step. The average annual growth for the airlines is estimated at around four per cent. It is only this annual growth that is to be addressed with the efficiency measures and compensation in question. "This will have no effect whatsoever on the climate pollution of up to 1000 million tons per year", says René Estermann. The four per cent growth being discussed comprises around 40 million tons of CO₂ per year. At a current price for quality projects according to the Gold Standard of 10-20 dollars per ton of proven reduction, this would mean an investment of 400-800 million dollars.

However, is there any guarantee that the airlines will set significant quality benchmarks? The compensation could take place with certificates, which "could be acquired" for a price of approximately one dollar per ton. In René Estermann's assessment: "While it is posed as being responsible, the offer they are making to the world according to this scenario accounts for 40-50 million dollars per year, with current annual savings of 100 billion dollars. This would be not even a drop in the bucket compared to the savings and by far not enough".

"From the viewpoint of airline passengers, this might be seen as positive if part of the savings are passed on as lower prices. In light of economic considerations, it might sound good that profits will increase significantly. However, from the perspective of climate policy on a global level, and so for all of us, it is a catastrophe", concludes Estermann. myclimate demands mandatory climate-neutral flights: Mandatory, full compensation of all greenhouse gas emissions for all emission sources, whether on the ground, in the air, or on the water; whether for mobility, energy production or the heating/cooling of buildings. This is based on the proven and fair "polluter pays" principle. Switzerland has been successfully realising this principle for decades with solid waste and wastewater. After initial opposition, it has since become simply a matter of course. "The 'polluter pays' principle has made a significant contribution to keeping Switzerland 'clean'. Clean lakes, rivers and forests would not be conceivable without a mandatory 'polluter pays' principle, and we need that principle for climate protection, too!" says René Estermann.

Links

ICAO press release "Historic Agreement reached to mitigate international Aviation Emissions"

<http://www.icao.int/Newsroom/Pages/Historic-agreement-reached-to-mitigate-international-aviation-emissions.aspx>

IATA Fact Sheet Fuel

http://www.iata.org/pressroom/facts_figures/fact_sheets/Documents/fact-sheet-fuel.pdf

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About myclimate – The Climate Protection Partnership

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myclimate is a partner for effective climate protection, globally and locally. Together with industry partners and private individuals, myclimate wants to shape the future of the world through advisory services and educational programmes, as well as its own projects. It does so in a market-oriented and customer-focused way as a non-profit organisation.

This international initiative with Swiss roots is one of the world's quality leaders in voluntary CO₂-compensation measures. Its customers include large, medium-sized and small companies, public administrations, non-profit organisations, event organisers and private individuals. Via its partner organisations, myclimate is represented in nine countries: Germany, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Greece, the United Arab Emirates, Japan and Turkey.

The high-quality projects promote quantifiable climate protection and greater sustainability worldwide. CO₂ emissions are currently compensated voluntarily by means of more than 70 climate protection projects in 30 countries. Emissions are reduced there by replacing fossil energy resources with renewable energies, and by implementing local afforestation measures with smallholder farmers and energy-efficient technologies. myclimate climate protection projects meet the highest standards (Gold Standard, CDM, Plan Vivo), which are not only proven to reduce greenhouse gases locally and regionally, but also make a positive contribution to sustainable development.

myclimate encourages everyone to make a contribution to our future, through interactive and action-orientated educational programmes. With this aim in mind, myclimate has already reached more than 15,000 school children and 7,000 trainees in Switzerland, and established a global network of 1,600 students and young professionals. Moreover, the foundation also advises on integrated climate protection with tangible added value. In the field of CO₂ and resource management, myclimate supports companies with advice, analyses, IT tools and labels. The portfolio ranges from simple carbon footprints (emissions calculations) at the corporate level through to comprehensive life cycle assessments for products. Our experienced advisors help with identifying and tapping into potential in the areas of energy and resource efficiency.

Since the foundation was established, the myclimate climate protection projects have created thousands of jobs, protected biodiversity and improved the general living conditions of hundreds of thousands of people. Not least because of this, the German Federal Environment Agency is explicitly showcasing myclimate as a supplier for voluntary CO₂ compensation. In both 2015 and 2012, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognised two myclimate projects as "game-changing Climate Lighthouse Activities", which were subsequently honoured by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the UN climate conferences in Paris and Doha. In addition, the myclimate education project "KlimaLokal" was awarded the Milestone Prize in 2012, the Swiss tourism industry's highest distinction. In May 2016, myclimate received the Swiss sustainability award PrixEco.

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