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**Call to the European Commission to propose an end to the tax exemption for aviation fuel in its revision of the Energy Taxation Directive**

Executive Vice-President for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age: Margrethe Vestager  
Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal: Frans Timmermans  
European Commissioner for Economy: Paulo Gentiloni  
European Commissioner for Transport: Adina Vălean

Dear Executive Vice-Presidents,

Dear Commissioners,

We hope you are keeping safe and well.

The past year has been very difficult for EU citizens and businesses. The Covid-19 pandemic has upended our way of life. The transport system has been particularly hard hit, and so many transport operators in the EU have seen their passenger numbers drop precipitously. As the vaccine rollout picks up pace, we are beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel. We have a long way to go yet, but now is the time to plan for a socially, ecologically and environmentally just recovery. For such a recovery, our transport system is in need of reform. Particularly when it comes to ensuring that we meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement, we cannot return to business as usual.

A crucial issue is taxation. Despite being a fundamental pillar of EU law, not all transport operators pay for the pollution they produce. [Aviation produces the highest CO2 emissions per passenger km travelled](#), yet there is no taxation at EU level on the fuel that is responsible for these emissions. The Energy Taxation Directive, which is due to be revised this year, allows Member States to exempt airlines from tax on fuel for intra-EU flights. Such an exemption is a fossil fuel subsidy that undermines the polluter pays principle and the Commission's goal to internalise external costs (as set out in its

[Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy](#)), the European Green Deal, fair competition between transport modes and efforts to make aviation more sustainable.

Ending this exemption is therefore a matter of fairness. EU consumers and businesses large and small all pay tax on the fuel they use. While we must continue to support all transport modes in their recovery from the effects of Covid-19 and be conscious of the difficulties faced by remote and peripheral regions, we must also recognise that this exemption undermines the EU's environmental goals given aviation's impact on the climate. It is also additional to other supports the sector enjoys that similarly undermine the polluter pays principle: free allowances under the Emissions Trading System, a lack of regulation of the non-CO2 effects of aviation and no taxation on tickets for intra-EU flights. We must fully enshrine the polluter pays principle and fair competition in EU law if we are to deliver on the European Green Deal.

It is for this reason that we are calling on the European Commission to propose an end to the tax exemption for aviation fuel in its revision of the Energy Taxation Directive and with it set an effective minimum EU-wide tax rate on the fuel that should come into effect without delay. A [study](#) commissioned by the European Commission found that such a tax would have no net impact on jobs, would reduce emissions, and would lead to increased government expenditure, or lower taxes and increased spending in the economy.

We sincerely hope therefore that, in line with previous supportive statements on this issue made by members of the College of Commissioners, you will end this anachronistic tax exemption and help put Europe on the path to a more socially, ecologically and environmentally just recovery.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Alice Kuhnke, Greens/EFA Member

Alviina Alametsä, Greens/EFA Member

Anna Cavazzini, Greens/EFA Member

Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg, Greens/EFA Member

Aurore Lalucq, S&D Member

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Caroline Roose, Greens/EFA Member  
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Clare Daly, GUE/NGL Member  
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Cornelia Ernst, GUE/NGL Member  
Damien Carême, Greens/EFA Member  
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