

The Estey

Journal of International Law and Trade Policy

Abstract

New Directions in Air Transport Economics and Policy: A Critical Examination of State Submissions to the 42nd ICAO Assembly

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The liberalization of international air transport remains a cornerstone of the International Civil Aviation Organization's mandate, yet its operationalization continues to present complex legal, economic, and policy challenges. This article critically examines the submissions of three Member States—the United Kingdom, Brazil, and the Republic of Korea—presented to the 42nd ICAO Assembly, each proposing innovative frameworks to advance liberalization while ensuring equitable participation and economic development. The United Kingdom advocates the transformation of the Template Air Services Agreement into a dynamic, multi-option “toolbox” to guide negotiators and harmonize diverse national policies. Brazil situates liberalization within a broader developmental context, emphasizing cross-cutting integration of economic objectives across ICAO workstreams to support capacity-building, inclusivity, and sustainable growth. The Republic of Korea highlights the necessity of standardized indicators to monitor fair competition and safeguard consumer welfare in increasingly complex global air transport markets. Drawing upon the Preamble to the Chicago Convention, the article analyses these proposals through epistemic and teleological lenses, assessing their normative coherence, operational feasibility, and potential to reconcile sovereignty with collective progress. Ultimately, this article offers constructive insights for ICAO's evolving role in fostering liberalization that is economically sound, socially inclusive, and legally robust.

Keywords: Air Services Agreements, air transport liberalization; Chicago Convention; economic development; fair competition; ICAO; international civil aviation

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