

## Eight in ten consultation responses critical of aviation tax

**A significant majority of consultation responses submitted to the Swedish government are strongly critical of a new Swedish aviation tax. Government agencies, regions, local government authorities and industry have rejected the climate benefit of the tax and warn of considerable negative socio-economic consequences.**

As at 1 March 2017, the end of the period for responses to the Inquiry's Swedish aviation tax proposal, a total of 197 responses had been submitted. The Swedish Air Transport Society's review of the responses shows that 126 of the 156 responders are negative to the tax, including responses from significant stakeholders such as the Swedish National Audit Office, The Swedish Agency for Public Management and The Swedish National Financial Management Authority. Criticisms focus in particular on the aviation tax's limited climate effects, an issue emphasised by the Swedish Air Transport Society since the Inquiry was established.

- Aviation taxes are completely lacking in climate benefit and the consultation responses show that this is clear to anyone reading the proposal, says Anna Wilson, Secretary General of the Swedish Air Transport Society.

Strong criticisms are also directed at the expected negative consequences of an aviation tax. More than eight in ten of the negative responses, including from The Swedish Agency for Economical and Regional Growth and the Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis, highlight that in many locations connectivity risks being reduced and local development will be threatened. Hardest hit would be those parts of Sweden where air travel is the only realistic alternative for reaching other parts of the country and the rest of the world. Responses from both rural communities and cities, from the country's north and south, warn of the consequences for development from an aviation tax.

- Fewer jobs, reduced accessibility and weaker competitiveness outside of the big cities is a high price to pay for an action that has no climate effect. At the same time we know that the best actions to reduce emissions can take advantage of aviation's benefits and contribute to a strengthening of Swedish industry, says Anna Wilson.

The Swedish Air Transport Society's ambition is that aviation will contribute to Sweden's aggressive environmental and climate objectives. This requires efforts that effectively reduce greenhouse emissions, and at the same time promote the benefits of aviation.

Business as usual is not an option. Through collaboration, Sweden can take a leadership role for sustainable global aviation and tackle the climate challenge. Air travel must reduce its emissions. That is why it is vital that the measures taken are truly effective. The Swedish Air Transport Society has emphasized that international governance, investments in new technologies, smarter air traffic management and investments in biofuels are significantly more effective measures for a sustainable aviation.

This view is also supported by other stakeholders, seven out of ten critical consultation responses points out that other measures are more effective than an aviation tax. One such measure is the EU's Single European Sky project, expected to generate 12 percent more efficient utilization of airspace in Europe, and thereby reducing emissions to the same extent.

With ambitious goals on climate policy as well as economic growth, it is obvious that an aviation tax with negligible impact in terms of reducing carbon emissions, but negative effects on the Swedish economy, is not the way forward for a sustainable aviation. The message given in the consultation responses is clear – an aviation tax must not be introduced. It is time for the government to listen!

The Swedish Air Transport Society's entire consultation response can be read here (only in Swedish)  
<http://www.svensktflyg.se/2017/03/remissammanstallning-en-svensk-flygskatt-sou-201683/>

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