

SUSTAINABLE AVIATION BEYOND COVID-19

SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY DEBATE
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2.00pm, Wednesday 16 September 2020

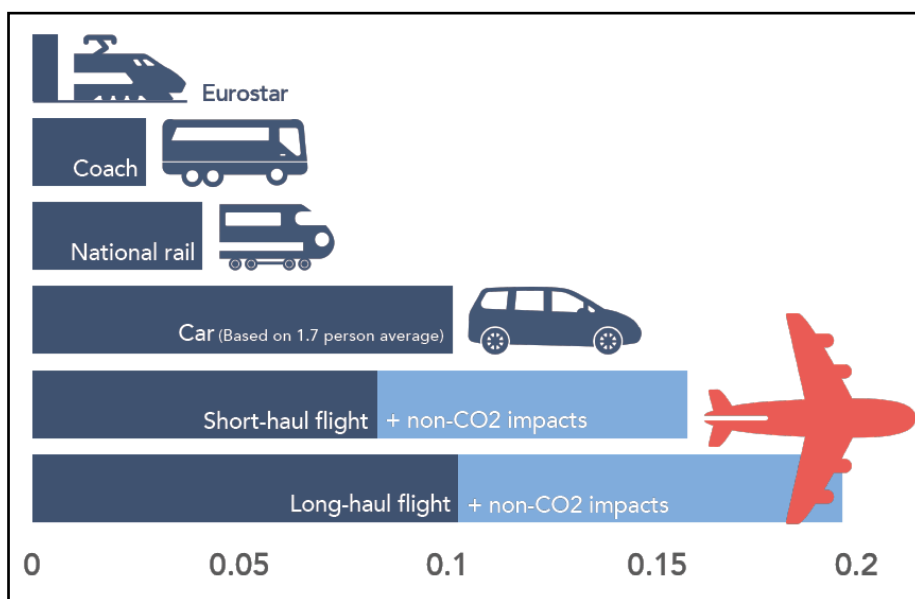
Joint briefing from Aviation Environment Federation & Transform Scotland



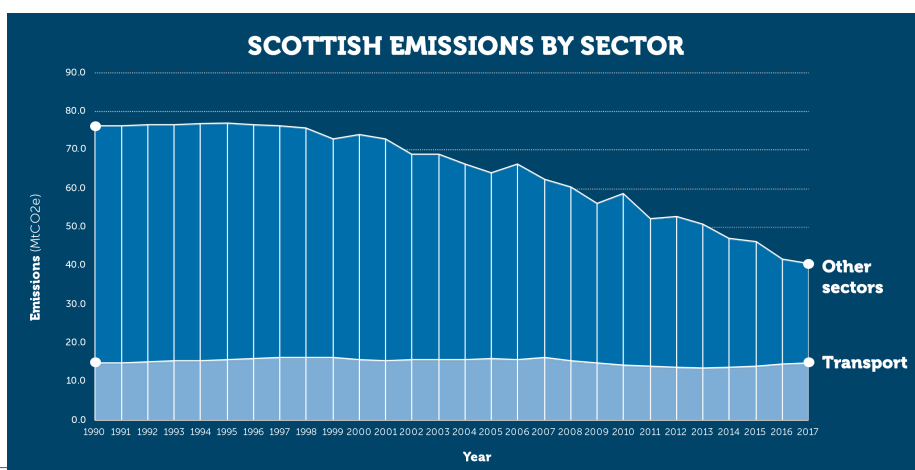
1. Key Points

- Transport is the biggest problem for tackling climate change, and aviation is the most polluting form of transport.
- There should be no new government financial support for stimulating aviation demand in the absence of meaningful action to tackle the sector's environmental impacts, including climate change & noise pollution.
- New aviation policy should take account of the new recommendations from the UK Climate Assembly.

2. Aviation is the most-polluting form of transport, and transport is Scotland's largest source of climate change emissions



Aviation is the most-polluting form of transport. It currently accounts for around 9% of UK CO₂ emissions (and 2-2.5% globally) and until the pandemic it was one of the fastest growing sources of CO₂ emissions in the world.



Transport is now Scotland's largest source of climate emissions (37% of emissions), and one where there has been no progress since 1990.

3. There should be no new financial support for the aviation sector in the absence of meaningful action to tackle emissions from aviation

The Motion calls for a “package of [financial] support for the industry” and goes on to say that this “should assist long-term changes within the sector to tackle the climate emergency and ensure a sustainable future”.

Our position is that there should be no new financial support for the aviation sector in the absence of meaningful action to tackle emissions from aviation. Doing otherwise would be in conflict with the Scottish Government’s Climate Emergency commitments.

Furthermore, we note the following:

- While the industry has set itself a target of net zero emissions, there is currently no policy mechanism for holding it to account to deliver this.
- Many airlines have benefited from Government loans and made extensive use of the staff furlough scheme during the pandemic. In recovering, they should make a fair contribution towards rebuilding public finances, and on the spending necessary to support a green recovery.
- Travel abroad should not be incentivised at a time when the UK’s domestic tourism and hospitality sectors need to rebuild.
- Aviation is already very lightly taxed. Airlines pay no tax on aviation fuel, there is no VAT on tickets, and airports benefit from duty-free retail.
- Flying is a discretionary activity undertaken largely by those in the top half of the income spectrum. The 15% of the UK population who fly frequently are responsible for 70% of all flights.

4. New aviation policy should take account of the UK Climate Assembly’s recommendations

The UK Climate Assembly – a ‘citizens’ assembly’ set up by six parliamentary select committees – published its recommendations on the path to net zero on 10th September.¹

The two key overarching recommendations from today’s report were, perhaps, the call for better public information and education about climate change, and the need to deliver net zero in a way that is fair, including to workers.

Amongst other things, “80% of assembly members ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that taxes that increase as people fly more often and as they fly further should be part of how the UK gets to get zero.”

¹ <https://www.climateassembly.uk/news/uk-path-net-zero-must-be-underpinned-education-choice-fairness-and-political-consensus-urges-climate-assembly/>

Scotland’s alliance for sustainable transport

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We campaign for walking, cycling and public transport to be the easiest and most affordable options for everyone. Our diverse membership brings together public, private and third sector organisations from across Scotland. We are a registered Scottish charity (SC041516).