

IMPACT OF AVIATION LAW ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

It is no secret that aviation law and international trade are closely related and that a good relationship between them produces benefits for all countries. The truth is that Costa Rica should be innovative and excel within the legal and trade areas.

For more than a century humanity has evolved in the field of aviation law from a political, economic and social perspective. The positive impact that aviation law has had on international trade would not have been possible without the appropriate legal framework. Although today there are numerous conventions, appendices and guidelines; clearly we still have a way to go.

More than a century has elapsed since that key moment for the global economy when the first flight in a controlled aircraft occurred. Since that time, the economy and globalization have led to circumstances that have forced nations to create universal strategies to develop essential links between aviation law and international trade in order to grow the economy. It is obvious therefore that the function of aviation law goes well beyond mere regular transport of passengers between countries and cities. Currently and because of its impact, aviation law comprises a worldwide source of economic, social and labor resources.

Dr. Griselda Capalda gives us in her analysis, “Nine Years after the 1999 Montreal Convention”, her judicial interpretation with regard to air passenger transport, stating that: “International civil aviation transports 2.5 million passengers each year and 35% of the value of all international trade, producing an estimated impact on the global economy of some USD 3.650 billion, equivalent to 7.5% of Gross World Product.”

With reference to employment, estimates indicate that the aviation industry produces approximately 58.1 million jobs worldwide, plus another nine million indirect jobs to address the needs of different service vendors. These numbers do not include the socio-economic impact of tourism as a result of the movement of people.

Moreover, a study conducted by Oxford in representation of ATAG (Air Transport Action Group) shows that increased cultural experiences improve the quality of life. Not to mention the advantages brought about through aviation, including, job creation, earnings from tourism, facilitated trade and reduced delivery times for medical supplies and organ transport.

Costa Rica has not been the exception in reaping these benefits. According to the Costa Rican Tourist Board, 88.2% of tourists who visited Costa Rica in 2013 came on vacation, to visit family, for medical care and for education. In that same year, the average expense per non-resident entering Costa Rica by air was approximately USD 1,322.60.

Accordingly, the reality for Costa Rica is that aviation is an important driving force for the economy. Consequently, we must continue to work towards the implementation of tools that stimulate increased accelerated benefits through programs that provide incentives for private aviation, air tourism and aero clubs. In addition, it is crucial to have an agency dedicated to ensuring and supporting sustained growth in the civil aviation industry, as a part of the General Civil Aviation Authority, with such responsibilities as: 1) fostering the creation of national aviation companies and promoting foreign investment, along with advisory services on financial, legal and technical viability, ii) promoting training for aviation personnel, iii) promoting quality assurance in aviation services, in general, and constantly seeking mechanisms to simplify and reduce times and costs for procedures required to obtain authorizations, permits and licenses from the General Civil Aviation Authority.

We don't have to wait another century to accomplish and exploit all of Costa Rica's potential to strengthen the industry and aviation law in order to attract all of its benefits.

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