

Data Act

EU WANTS TO PROMOTE THE USE AND FAIR EXCHANGE OF INDUSTRIAL DATA

A new legislative proposal by the EU Commission “on fair access to and use of data” offers enormous opportunities for optimised flight operations, more innovation, and fewer emissions. The principle is that anyone purchasing a connected device should have access to and control over the data generated through it. The same concept is also applicable to aircraft data and is overdue. A general reference to „business secrets“ must not be used to delay or even prevent this important project.

According to Digital Commissioner Vestager, the fundamental plan is “to give consumers and companies even more control over what can be done with their data.” This is also an urgent need in air transport. After all, a Lufthansa aircraft generates about 2.5 terabytes of data per day through its modern sensors during operation. That corresponds to the data volume of more than 600 cinematic films. So far, however, this data has not been used by Lufthansa, but by the aircraft manufacturers. This way, the airlines are deprived of important innovation potential. The EU law now regulates, for the first time, who may use industrial data under which conditions: the manufacturer or the user? With the Data Act, the EU Commission is giving a precise answer: anyone who purchases a connected device is also entitled to know the data relevant to its use. What sounds obvious was not the case until now.

Fair data access for manufacturers AND airlines

Aircraft manufacturers control the flow of data from the sensor via the aircraft to the ground. In order to obtain access to the data from the manufacturer, the airlines have to conduct laborious negotiations. As a result, aircraft manufacturers are expanding their data monopoly and offering exclusive services that are only available via their platforms. This is where the Data Act is supposed to help. For Lufthansa, this would mean in concrete terms: Access to and control over the data that its fleet generates in operation.

More efficiency and innovation

Access to data – ideally in real time – enables airlines to better analyse and thus optimise the life cycle and fuel consumption of their aircraft fleets. This is important, for example, for older components to already be identified and maintained at an early stage by evaluating sensor data (i.e. predictive maintenance). Example: Engines that show unusual behaviour in relation to identical models can be



Aircraft = XXL data producers

Modern Lufthansa aircraft generate around 2.5 terabytes of data per day. This corresponds to the data volume of over 600 cinematic films.



cleaned, taken out of service, or maintained ahead of time. An extension to other aircraft systems would further increase the eco-efficiency of flight operations.

Moreover, the Data Act is intended to simplify the sharing of data with third parties – including maintenance companies, SMEs, start-ups, and universities. This would create new business models and better competition. Both help airlines to operate more cost-effectively and sustainably.

Currently, the EU Parliament and Council are discussing the legislative proposal. The upcoming decisions will set the framework for industrial data management in Europe in the coming decades. The technological and ecological innovation potentials are enormous, especially in air transport. Therefore, the Commission's proposals should be approved and implemented quickly.

The following aspects are crucial:

- Airlines should be given access to and control over the data generated during their flight operations and be able to pass on their fleet data to third parties commissioned by them. This would enable fair innovation competition for more efficient and climate-friendly flight operations.
- Aircraft manufacturers are often concerned about maintaining trade secrets and the associated protection of intellectual property. The Data Act, on the other hand, refers exclusively to the data that can be recorded and utilized during operation. By analysing this operational data, neither the aircraft nor individual components can be reproduced. The arguments of the manufacturers must therefore be viewed in a differentiated manner.

Creating added value through data sharing

EU Commission proposal:
manufacturers and users share data

