

Aviation and climate change

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Madam, - Ulrich Schulte-Strathaus of the Association of European Airlines writes that it is "entirely misleading to suggest that aviation is now the fastest-growing source of CO₂ emissions" on the basis that "air travel accounts for only 2 per cent of CO₂ emissions globally" (September 26th).

This is a highly disingenuous statement for several reasons. In the first instance, the baseline figure of 2 per cent refers to a 1999 study by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) using data from 1992. We have done a lot of flying since then and today's figure is much higher (over 4 per cent for Europe). Secondly, it is future growth in the baseline figure that is the real concern. While Mr Schulte-Strathaus refers to possible increases in aircraft fuel efficiency, he ignores the larger effects of a predicted growth in passenger numbers. IPCC concerns over aircraft emissions of other greenhouse gases and the effect of emissions at high altitude are similarly omitted.

- Yours, etc,

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