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EASA's Proposed Environmental Label Programme – Benefits and Shortcomings

The aviation industry remains in the spotlight with respect to its environmental impacts. For this reason, EASA initiated a survey in 2019. It was found that 75% of the travelers would welcome an environmental label for aviation. European citizens want to be in a position to make a choice among offered flights and therefore be empowered to change aviation to the better. Accordingly, EASA received a mandate from the European Commission and the European Parliament to set up the Environmental Label Programme to provide credible, trusted, harmonized, reliable and easily understandable information for passengers regarding aviation's environmental impacts. EASA decided to make the label transparent, voluntary and holistic. The label should build on existing standards, data and best practice. EASA launched the program with the aim of informing passengers of the environmental impact of their flight options. There are three labels in development: The Flight Label, Airline Label, and Aircraft Label. On 25 April 2023 the European Council and Parliament agreed (among other things) on a Union labeling scheme about the environmental performance of aircraft operators to help consumers make informed travel choices. By 1 January 2024, the EU Commission shall adopt a delegated act to supplement the Regulation ReFuelEU by setting out the detailed provisions and technical standards for the functioning of the Union labeling system for the environmental performance of aircraft, aircraft operators and commercial flights. One year later the labeling system shall start its operation and in 2027 a review is scheduled.

The presentation summarizes the information available so far about EASA's proposed Environmental Label Programme. The Flight Label will be based on data reported by airlines (yearly by route): total fuel used, SAF used (and percentage of green house gas reduction), cargo carried, number of flights, passengers (seats per cabin class). If the aircraft type must be reported by the airline is not decided yet. The methodology will consider fuel burn per flight, passenger versus cargo ratio, fuel burn conversion into CO2 emissions (including fuel life cycle considerations), flight emissions per passenger as well as per passenger kilometers, and the application of a cabin class multiplication factor.

Existing standards are presented and discussed: ICAO Annex 16 – Environmental Protection: Vol. 1: Aircraft Noise, Vol. 2: Aircraft Engine Emissions, Vol. 3: CO2 Certification Requirements (EASA CS-CO2). Already existing aviation ecolabel definitions are presented (notably from Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, see Figure 1) to contrast EASA's proposal and to highlight its probable benefits and shortcomings.

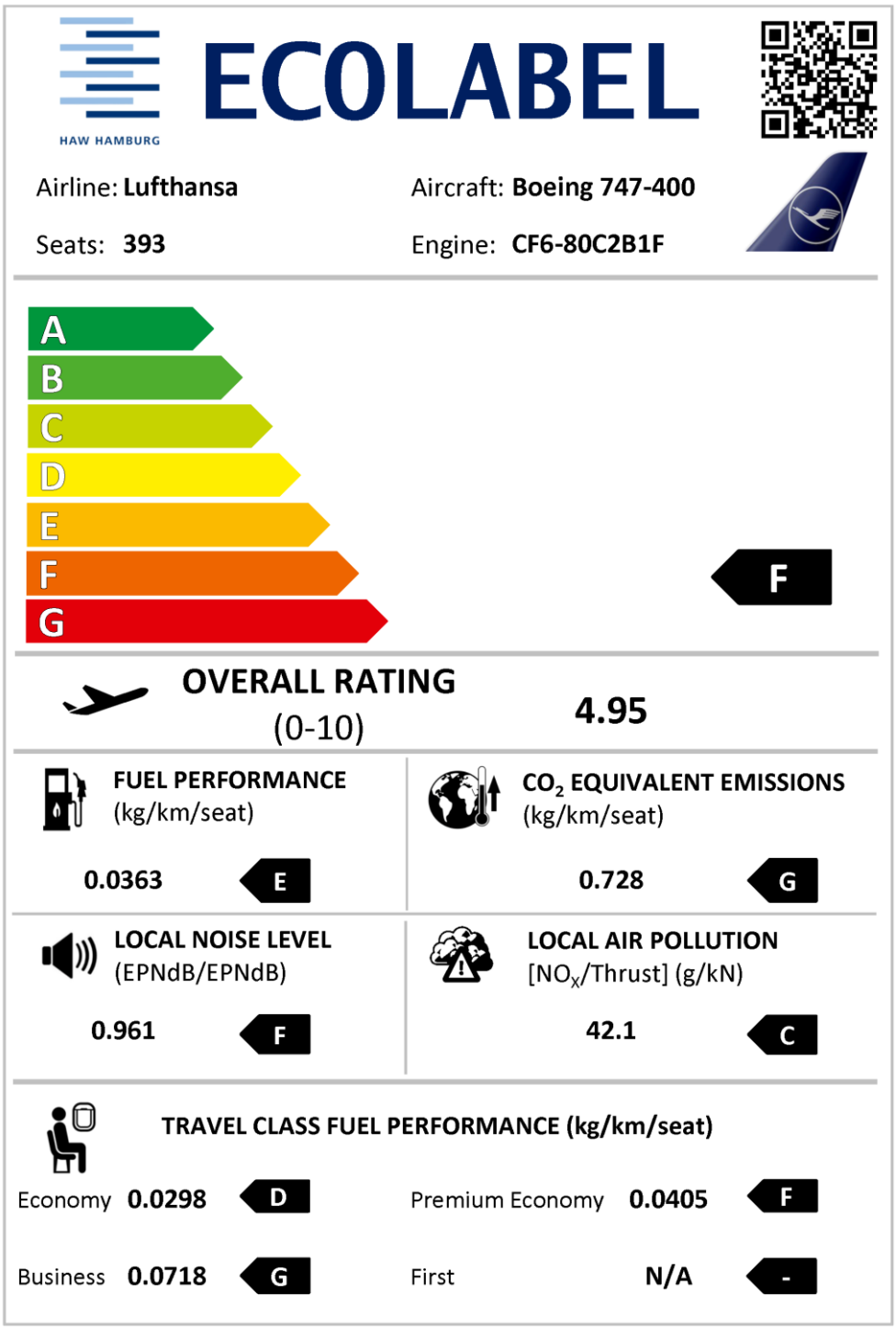

Figure 1: Example of an Ecolabel for Aircraft according to the definition of Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg). See http://ecolabel.ProfScholz.de for further details.

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