**National Assembly**

**Question No 3531**

**Ms H S Winkler (DA) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

With reference to the air licensing backlog caused by the delay in finalising the appointment of the Air Services Licensing Council, which prevents local airlines from acquiring new international routes and/or flight frequencies, what (a) is the current status of the air licensing backlog and (b) interactions has his department had with the Department of Tourism regarding the backlogs? NW4344E

**REPLY**

**(a) what is the current status of the air licensing backlog?**

The Licensing Councils had a total of 166 applications/amendment applications submitted between March 2020 and March 2022. As of March 2022, the Councils have adjudicated 113 applications.

The table below shows a breakdown of the applications:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Application** | **Number** | **Considered by Councils** | **Pending consideration** |
| New Applications | 49 | 25 | 24 |
| Amendment Applications | 117 | 88 | 29 |
| Total | 166 | 113 | 53 |

From the backlog, the Council has 53 pending applications/ amendment applications that need to be considered.

A directive was issued by the Minister that all pending applications and/or new applications which were delegated to the South Africa Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) pending the appointment of both Councils must be attended too with speed, so as to enable industry to ramp up post some of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

New applications have since been submitted by air service operators, together with revised and/amended documents as some information as, due to the lapse of time, expired and/or become irrelevant. Revised and updated documentation is being submitted to the Council Secretariat on a daily basis and this is facilitating the speedy adjudication and communication of Council Resolutions to operators, so as to ensure that they are able to ramp up their operations.

**(b) interactions his department had with the Department of Tourism regarding the backlogs?**

The Department of Transport did not have any interaction with the Department of Tourism regarding the backlogs. The Department does not engage with the Department of Tourism on the adjudication of air services licenses.

The Department of Transport (DOT) had an interaction with the Department of Tourism and other relevant stakeholders during the Strategic Planning Session (SPC), this year in July 2022, at Wapadrand, Pretoria **to discuss matters** relating to international and domestic air transport. This platform promotes interaction with the aviation industry and relevant Government Departments.

Conversely, the International Air Services Council (IASC), participated in the Tourism Leadership Conference (TBCSA) and the Chairperson of this Council was a panellist, wherein she provided the delegates with insight on some of the topical matters that this Council has been adjudicating upon as part of the tourism recover strategy. The TBCSA seeks to restore the domestic **tourism** industry post the COVID-19 pandemic, in that it gathered industry players and policymakers under one roof, to reflect, discuss and forge a way forward for the industry. It was held from 14-16 September 2022.