

## **ACI EUROPE WORKING PAPER – “OFF THE GROUND”**

Report of the HR WS – Call for support measures to help airports bring employees back to work

Status: Public

Date: 14 May 2020

Recommendations to EU/EEA Member States and European Commission

---

### **1. Recommendations to call back the airport workforce currently on short term or temporary unemployment**

---

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this Covid- 19 crisis, it is essential for airports and aviation in general to be supported by the European institutions and national governments. Aviation was hit by COVID-19 in an unprecedented way with far reaching and long lasting economic consequences. In order to sustain the industry and help alleviate the financial burden, the set of support measures below is recommended.

#### **1.2 PROBLEM DEFINITION**

Most European airlines grounded their operations leaving airports with little or no traffic. The persistent lack of cashflow for several months in a row caused airport management to take drastic measures to cut costs. Airport employees were sent on temporary unemployment schemes, furloughed or laid off. In these circumstances, it is critically important to help airports retain highly qualified airport professionals to ensure business continuity in the short and long term. The recovery for the airport sector will be long and slow; therefore financial support at national and European levels need to be extended.

#### **1.3 PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Extend a short-term work allowance till the end of the summer, to prevent job losses.

#### **1.4 EXPECTED OUTCOME**

The above solution will help airports retain qualified staff as well as ensure business continuity.

### **2. Measures to protect physical health**

---

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Airports need to ensure a safe working environment, both physically, and mentally for their employees to return to. Enhanced protective measures and equipment are essential when resuming work post COVID-19.

## **2.2 PROBLEM DEFINITION**

Airports have frontline workers as well as administrative staff. Airports, are public space and maybe be exposed to viruses. It is imperative to drastically reduce/eliminate the chance of contamination between airport employees and passengers.

## **2.3 PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Guaranteed supply of necessary personal protective equipment for airport workers as applicable per national standards.
- Access to COVID-19 testing subsidies by national authorities.

## **2.4 EXPECTED OUTCOME**

The above measures will ensure a safer environment for all airport stakeholders and passengers.

## **3. Additional and new skills required to face the aftermath of the crisis**

---

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Resuming airport operations after a prolonged lockdown will require certain competencies and skills. It is strongly recommended to organize e-learning/webinars to focus on raising awareness about sanitary measures, internal procedures, and psychological competencies.

### **3.2 PROBLEM DEFINITION**

Airport employees will require new skills and competences to work in post pandemic situations. However, having been out of business for several months, airports may not have budgets to organize trainings and recruit specialists to help employees deal with psychological issues. Remote and more flexible working is to be encouraged, in line with local regulations.

### **3.3 PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Subsidise e-learning platforms and webinars on personal wellbeing in all EU official languages
- Tax breaks to help airport operators finance home offices
- Financial support to prepare more specialists in PTSD (through Erasmus+)
- Special grants to students in psychology/coaching volunteering to work at local airports
- Special grants to recruit psychologists to support employees coming back to work who need individualised counselling.

### **3.4 EXPECTED OUTCOME**

Airports will be able to train their workforce to work in post pandemics environment with the help of subsidised trainings. Access to highly qualified psychology professionals will be beneficial to employees well-being and increase airport service quality.

## **CONCLUSION**

The above solutions will be particularly useful to retain the airport workforce, keep it well informed and trained to work in public spaces post pandemics while at the same time being confident to come back to a safe working environment after an extensive period of lockdown. Home working will be facilitated for those employees who do not need to come to the airport to complete their tasks.