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ACI EUROPE rebuts misguided and unrealistic claims by T&E

Brussels, 13 November 2025: Transport & Environment (T&E) today released a report with a headline claiming that air passenger growth does not drive economic growth. This astonishing claim is at odds with scores of academic and empirical studies that demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between air transport and economic growth, and the vast range of socioeconomic benefits it provides.

Even more astonishingly, T&E – at odds with their own headline – empirically reconfirm with data up to 2023 that air connectivity is linked to higher GDP per capita, by stating on page 13 that *"the best estimate of the MG model is that a 10% increase in air connectivity is correlated with a 0.5% increase in GDP per capita, when averaging across Europe."*

The focus of T&E's report is to destabilise the idea that air connectivity growth also leads to economic growth. But there is overwhelming evidence of a causal relationship: air connectivity does drive economic growth. The SEO Economics study commissioned by ACI EUROPE – and cited by T&E/NEF – directly addresses questions of the bi-causal relationship. Additionally, the independent academic study by Pot & Koster – cited by both T&E and ACI EUROPE – established an evident relationship of air transport and growth.

T&E's claim that some countries in northern Europe are somehow losing out on the benefits of aviation because their citizens take holidays in southern Europe misses the point of the network benefits of aviation. The reality is that this is not a win-loss situation, but a positive outcome for total European welfare and the EU's core value of equality.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE commented: *"Negating the economic and social realities of our sector by making unrealistic assumptions and slicing data into meaningless clusters is akin to disinformation."*

"This is the last thing Europe's policy makers, businesses and citizens need to address the dual challenge of competitiveness and sustainability that now stands at the very top of EU and national priorities. We all need to work constructively, honestly, and cooperatively to address this unprecedented challenge."

Access ACI EUROPE's Benefits of Airports & Air Connectivity Report [here](#).

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ACI EUROPE is the European region of Airports Council International (ACI), the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents over 600 airports in 55 countries. Our members facilitate over 95% of commercial air traffic in Europe. Airports and air connectivity support 14 million jobs, generating €851 billion in European economic activity (5% of GDP). In response to the Climate Emergency, in June 2019 our members committed to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions for operations under their control by 2050, without offsetting.