



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

European competitiveness requires effective and consistent enforcement of Noise Balanced Approach at Europe's airports

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Brussels, 27 February 2026: ACI EUROPE today reiterated its call on the European Commission and European Member States to effectively and consistently abide by the internationally agreed Noise Balanced Approach framework for managing aircraft noise, as set out by ICAO and the EU law.

This call took the form of a comprehensive analysis and a set of recommendations published in response to the European Commission's evaluation of the EU Noise Balanced Approach Regulation and in anticipation of a wider public consultation.

The Regulation establishes a legally binding, step-by-step process for managing aircraft noise at airports. It requires competent authorities to first assess and deploy measures under the three primary pillars of noise management: 1. Reduction at source, in particular through the use of quieter aircraft and airline fleet renewal; 2. Land-use planning and management through zoning regulations, building restrictions and noise insulation programmes; and 3. Operational procedures, including optimised flight paths and preferential runway use.

These three pillars need to be thoroughly assessed alongside a robust socio-economic and cost-effectiveness assessment. Only where these measures have proven insufficient may operating restrictions at airports be considered – and strictly as a last resort.

Olivier Jankovec, ACI EUROPE Director General, said: *"If Europe is serious about restoring its competitiveness and boosting its economy, it must be able to fully capitalise on its airport infrastructure. This means making the most of available capacity to safeguard and develop its connectivity within well-defined and realistic noise containment objectives – and this is precisely what the EU Noise Balanced Approach Regulation is about. Yet, this is not what is happening. Not only is the implementation of the Balanced Approach inconsistent across the EU – but several countries have recently simply disregarded it. They have looked at introducing operating restrictions which limit the use of available airport capacity without considering other ways of reducing noise exposure and have also by-passed the cost effectiveness assessments mandated by the EU Regulation. In doing so, these countries are undermining the effectiveness of airport noise abatement efforts and compromising the economic and social benefits of air connectivity for their communities and regions."*

European airports are proactively implementing operational noise abatement procedures – such as continuous descent operations (CDOs), performance-based navigation, and optimised runway usage – to effectively reduce the noise footprint affecting surrounding areas.

In parallel, airports are working closely with airlines to promote the use of quieter aircraft, using differential charges and incentive schemes to accelerate fleet renewal. These efforts are yielding measurable results, with European Environment Agency forecasting that the number of people highly annoyed by aircraft noise in the EU is projected to decline by 32% by 2030.

Jankovec added: *"Airports have been addressing aircraft noise proactively for decades as part of their sustainability strategies. The Balanced Approach Regulation – if applied correctly and consistently – can support these efforts, whereas blunt operating restrictions can only wreak havoc. The need to balance noise abatement with the socio-economic role of airports is at the core of the policy recommendations we are publishing today and must be top of mind for all stakeholders through a consistent application of EU law."*

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Note to Editors

Learn more from the ACI EUROPE Position Paper on the Implementation of EU Regulation 598/2014 Balanced Approach available for download [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.