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## ACI EUROPE reveals Best Airport Award winners for 2026

**Prague, 24 June 2026:** The annual **ACI EUROPE 2026 Best Airport Awards** winners were announced yesterday during the Gala Dinner of the 36<sup>th</sup> ACI EUROPE Annual Congress and General Assembly, taking place in Prague, Czechia, hosted by Prague Airport.

The ACI EUROPE Best Airport Awards are the region's most prestigious recognition of airport performance, celebrating innovation, sustainability, and outstanding passenger experiences. Recognising that Europe's airports showcase excellence across multiple areas, the 2026 Best Airport Awards honour airports that demonstrate outstanding performance and exemplary best-practice implementation across operational efficiency, service quality, and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) impact, giving equal weight to each area.

Four area-specific awards were also presented, including Digital Transformation Award, Eco-Innovation Award, HR Excellence Award and World Business Partner Recognition.

### **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AWARD – HELSINKI AIRPORT**

The Digital Transformation Award, an initiative of the SESAR Joint Undertaking in collaboration with ACI EUROPE, recognises a European airport that has embraced digitalisation, and adopted innovative technologies and procedures to improve the safety, capacity, efficiency, and environmental footprint of its operations. This year's winner, **Helsinki Airport**, impressed the judges with a highly mature, situationally-aware, and operationally-embedded digital platform – delivering clear efficiency savings and enhanced operational resilience. As a mark of their success, the platform has been scaled across 20 airports, improving coordination at network level and showcasing a strategic and future-focused approach to digital transformation.

**London Heathrow Airport** was also highly commended in this category.

### **ECO-INNOVATION AWARD – STUTTGART AIRPORT**

The Eco-Innovation Award – in cooperation with *Airport Carbon Accreditation* – recognises airports that have demonstrated outstanding performance in and an innovative approach to environmental management.

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This year's winner, **Stuttgart Airport**, was highly praised for a holistic approach to green operations and their particularly commendable progress towards carbon-neutral apron operations. The jury was particularly impressed by their genuine world-first use of their hardware, and the project's remarkable achievement in delivering a 97.6% reduction in apron fleet CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

**iGA Istanbul Airport** was also highly commended in this category.

### **HR EXCELLENCE AWARD – VASIL LEVSKI SOFIA AIRPORT**

The HR Excellence Award recognises an airport's HR department that has demonstrated excellence in managing human resources and developing the airport workforce for the future; aiming to give exposure to new procedures and skills for the overall betterment of the airport community. This year, the applications were judged with a special focus on the successful application of AI tools and technologies to support HR practices, enhance workforce development, and help prepare airport organisations for the opportunities and challenges in the years to come.

**Vasil Levski Sofia Airport's** winning application included what judges described as an excellent analytical framework for identifying key bottlenecks and improving employee experience, showcasing a transformative use of AI across many HR functions. Their entry was praised for successfully combining innovation with a strong focus on enhancing human capability and employee experience, positioning the airport as a leading example of future-focused HR transformation.

**Milan Bergamo Airport** was also highly commended in this category.

### **WORLD BUSINESS PARTNER RECOGNITION – DR. HOLGER SCHULZ, AIRSIGHT GMBH**

The ACI EUROPE World Business Partner Recognition honours either an individual or company that is a World Business Partner of ACI EUROPE and that has made significant contributions to the industry. It commends the exemplary efforts made by the World Business Partner community and the value they provide to ACI EUROPE as a whole.

The winner, **Dr. Holger Schulz** of **airsight GmbH**, has demonstrated exceptional leadership and vision over 25 years in the aviation industry. A distinguished member of ACI EUROPE since 2007, Dr. Holger Schulz' work with ACI EUROPE, ACI World, and ICAO, alongside his valued contribution to the ACI EUROPE Technical, Operations and Safety Committee, shows his impact on our industry is both meaningful and lasting.

### **BEST AIRPORT IN THE UNDER 5 MILLION PASSENGERS CATEGORY – WROCLAW AIRPORT**

This award was secured by **Wrocław Airport**, who delivered record passenger traffic whilst managing transformative construction works and supporting a major international event in the same year. Recognised by judges for its operational innovation, including an advanced baggage handling system, digital operational control tools, robotic loading, and autonomous vehicles, Wrocław Airport delivered both impressive service quality and strong operational performance. Additionally, their distinctive environmental programme – including a bee and honey apiary project – stood out as uniquely innovative to the jury.

**Rovaniemi Airport** was also highly commended in this category.

### **BEST AIRPORT IN THE 5-10 MILLION PASSENGERS CATEGORY — RIGA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

The winner, **Riga International Airport**, wowed the judges with a strong commitment to technology investment designed to improve operational and economic performance, with an emphasis on management systems and strategic execution. Judges praised a dynamic airport with promising development, noting that their excellent results allow them to stand alongside many larger peers, with a coherent and impressive long-term framework.

**Torino Airport** was also highly commended in this category.

### **BEST AIRPORT IN THE 10-25 MILLION PASSENGERS CATEGORY — VENICE MARCO POLO AIRPORT**

**Venice Marco Polo Airport**, this year's winner, was particularly commended for utilising the 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Games as a catalyst for lasting improvements across operational performance, service quality, and ESG impact. Judges remarked that the airport not only delivered a fantastic service and experience for the Games, but used it to embed many new practices into its everyday and future operations – creating a long-term legacy of high performance and inclusive design.

**London Luton Airport** was also highly commended in this category.

### **IN THE 25-40 MILLION PASSENGERS CATEGORY — VIENNA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

Noted for its ability to turn infrastructural constraints into a driver of innovation, winners **Vienna International Airport** were applauded for a commitment to passenger satisfaction and on-time performance. An advanced data-driven model including AI gate allocation and real-time dashboards, alongside benchmarks combining scale, efficiency, and innovation contributed to their top-tier operational performance.

**Málaga-Costa Del Sol Airport** was also highly commended in this category.

## **BEST AIRPORT IN THE OVER 40 MILLION PASSENGERS – ROME FIUMICINO AIRPORT**

**Rome Fiumicino Airport** now continues a record run of winning in the Over 40 Million Passengers category, showcasing how they are truly unparalleled in excellence amongst the mega-hubs. Consistently pushing boundaries with a remarkable focus on innovation, their shift towards predictive and AI-driven operations is matched by a deep commitment to passenger experience. Described by judges as 'an excellent airport that never stops', passengers consistently remain at the very heart of their work and vision.

**iGA Istanbul Airport** was also highly commended in this category.

## **EXPERT PANEL OF JUDGES**

The ACI EUROPE Best Airport Awards are reviewed by an expert panel of judges who utilise their extensive experience in the transport industry to decide upon the worthy winners. ACI EUROPE offers gratitude and thanks to the judges: **Filip Cornelis** (Director for Aviation, Directorate E, DG MOVE, European Commission), **Angela Gittens** (Former Director General, ACI World), **Andreas Boschen** (Executive Director, SESAR Joint Undertaking), **Patricia Reverdy** (Executive Secretary, ECAC), **Raúl Medina Caballero** (Director General, EUROCONTROL), **Florian Guillermet** (Executive Director, EASA), **Mark Pilling** (Managing Editor, Aviation Week Network), **Cheol-yun Kang** (Senior Programme Manager, OECD), the **ACI EUROPE Board**, the **Advisory Board of the Airport Carbon Accreditation** programme, the **Chair of the ACI EUROPE Leadership and HR Forum**, and the **Chairs of the ACI Regional Human Resources Committees**.

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Download the photos from the Best Airport Awards 2026 ceremony [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.