AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL

27 April 2016

Mr Jan Jambon
Vice-Premier ministre et ministre de la Sécurité et de l'Intérieur, chargé de la Régie des bâtiments
Service Public Fédéral Intérieur
Rue de la loi, 2
1000 Brussels
BELGIUM

Olivier Jankovec
Director General

Mr François Bellot
Ministre de la Mobilité, chargé de Belgocontrol et de la Société nationale des chemins de fer belges
Service Public Fédéral Mobilité et Transports
Rue Ernest Blérot 1
1070 Anderlecht
BELGIUM

Dear Minister Jambon,
Dear Minister Bellot,

Re: Brussels Airport – Landside Security Measures

Airports Council International – European region (ACI EUROPE) is the only European-wide association representing Europe's airports with over 500 airport members in 45 states. This means that ACI EUROPE has unrivalled experience and knowledge in all aspects of airport operations and, in particular in airport security.

On this basis, I would like to express our concerns as to the permanence of the current extra security measures applied landside at Brussels airport and other Belgian airports.

While we understand that these measures were deemed necessary to reassure the travelling public in the immediate aftermath of the terrible attacks of 22 March, ACI EUROPE considers that the permanence of such measures is now potentially creating new security vulnerabilities – and that such vulnerabilities might even increase at Brussels Airport as the airport is progressively restoring its full capacity.

In particular, the screening of all passengers on entry to the terminal (temporary tent) is counter-productive from a counter terrorism perspective; the crowd (very large at peak times, with passengers taking more than an hour to be screened) presents an ideal target for those with bad intent. As a result the potential target for terrorists at Brussels Airport (as well as other Belgian airports) has been moved to the entrance/outside the terminal – and cannot be considered to be secured.

It is worth noting that even at Tel Aviv - Ben Gurion Airport (Israel) - which is a global reference in terms of security at airports - passengers are not screened at the entrance to their terminal. Instead the Israeli authorities adopt a layered approach and use a mix of intelligence, number plate recognition, surveillance cameras, advanced communications messaging, explosive detection dogs (EDD), passenger profiling, behaviour detection analysis and high visibility security patrols to deter would-be attackers.

Therefore, ACI EUROPE is urging the Belgian authorities to urgently review the extra security measures currently implemented at airports across the country. Accordingly, the systematic screening of passengers on entry to the terminal facilities should be removed, or at the very least, scaled back. Conversely, measures such as those implemented by the Israeli authorities should be considered – with their mix and intensity geared to a specific risk assessment.

.../...

Allow me to stress that the above request is based on the outcomes and conclusions of the last ACI EUROPE Security Committee meeting held in Madrid on 14-15 April 2016, which included in-depth session on airport landside security where best practices ad valuable lessons were identified.

Our Aviation Security Committee, which is over 100 members strong, gathers experience, best practices and expertise from a wide variety of airports across Europe including Israel, the Russian Federation and Turkey - where significant terrorist attacks have been experienced over the years. These members come from a variety of backgrounds that include intelligence services, police counter terrorism services, military services and government services.

This gives ACI EUROPE an extensive pool of knowledge in security matters, allowing our organisation to act as a unique and sought after centre of expertise – providing valuable insight into the kind of security measures that are practical, operationally feasible and prove effective against terrorist attacks. Hence, ACI EUROPE is a trusted partner to the European Commission (DG MOVE and DG HOME *et al*), Member State Appropriate Authorities, the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) and the US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and others.

These authorities and institutions regularly seek advice and support in airport security issues from ACI EUROPE. In particular, it should be noted that ACI EUROPE has been tasked by ECAC with drafting best practice advice for airport landside security, in the framework of our participation to the ECAC Guidance Material Task Force on aviation security. This guidance material will be made available to all ECAC Contracting States, including Belgium.

I thank you for your attention in this matter. ACI EUROPE stands ready to assist wherever possible and trusts that a more viable and security effective solution is forthcoming for Belgian airports.

Yours sincerely,

