

ACI EUROPE

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Airports react to EP vote on revised Ground handling regulation

For immediate release

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16 April 2013: Earlier today, the European Parliament adopted in first reading its amendments to a proposal from the European Commission for a new Regulation on ground handling services at EU airports. ACI EUROPE is hopeful that this latest development should now allow the legislative process to resume on the other important components of Commissioner Kallas' *Better Airports* Package: the much needed revision of EU rules on airport slots and a better enforcement of the ICAO "Balanced Approach" for aviation noise.

In relation to ground handling, ACI EUROPE however regrets that the entire debate was dominated by the related topics of further market opening and social provisions. Given that the market is already largely open in most of Europe, these issues will only have a limited impact. Conversely, the European Parliament has neglected vital, technical and day-to-day operational issues that are instrumental to improving the passenger experience across Europe. Indeed, crucial questions such as the workable implementation of minimum service quality levels for ground handling, the role of airports as ground coordinators and the need for airports to be able to subcontract, have not been properly analysed and considered. Unless these are addressed in the second reading, there is a significant chance that operational and legal problems will arise, including undesirable distortion of competition.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General ACI EUROPE commented "The goal of achieving "Better Airports" is something that we genuinely share with the European Commission and that Europe's airports are committed to achieving. The second reading offers a fresh opportunity to look at the substance of how regulation can genuinely improve the passenger experience."

He added "This should drive legislators not only in relation to ground handling, but also airport slot allocation – where decisive improvements are needed to ensure better use of capacity at congested airports."

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Notes for Editors:

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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 400 airports in 44 European countries. Member airports handle 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe, welcoming more than 1.5 billion passengers each year.

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Press release