

ACI EUROPE

10 Rue Montoyer (Box 9)
1000 Brussels, Belgium
www.aci-europe.org

Airports call for transparency and participation in aviation negotiations

For immediate release

14 April 2015

Brussels, 14 April 2015: Last week, ACI EUROPE wrote to EU transport ministers* asking them to confirm to what extent their national airports have access to the content of international aviation agreements they have concluded with other States, and whether these airports are consulted on and associated with the negotiation of such agreements.

International aviation agreements regulate air services between States by determining which airlines can fly, which airports can be served and the other conditions under which air services can be provided – in particular as regards to frequencies, capacity and fares. As such, these agreements fundamentally shape the ability of airports to develop the connectivity of their local and regional communities, either by adding new international destinations or by increasing frequencies and aircraft seat capacity to existing destinations.

A survey recently conducted by ACI EUROPE revealed that airports in several European countries are not consulted by their national aviation authorities as part of the negotiation of these international aviation agreements. In many cases, airports do not even have access to the content of existing agreements. In addition, few European countries appear to have established administrative rules regarding the timeline for processing applications from foreign airlines wishing to operate air services on the basis of these agreements. Indeed, long delays with these applications and inertia can serve as an effective barrier to entry.

This situation hurts airports' ability to attract airlines by marketing their own location and services – which they often do jointly with their local tourism authorities and business communities. ACI EUROPE considers that these practices could be considered as contravening the principles of non-discrimination and transparency mandated by EU Regulation 847/2004** with regard to international aviation agreements.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General ACI EUROPE said *“Developing connectivity is a business imperative for any airport and it goes hand in hand with economic growth and job creation, especially under the present circumstances. In this respect, the interests of both airports and their surrounding communities are one and the same. It is absurd that these overlapping interests are not always properly accounted for, and that the mindset of some national aviation authorities seems to be stuck in the 1960s - when international aviation negotiations were exclusively focused on the interest of just one incumbent airline. That attitude no longer reflects the reality of our industry - neither its strategic relevance for the economy nor the need for a more passenger-driven approach.”*

He added *“These issues should be addressed by the European Commission as part of its forthcoming Aviation Package. While both the transformation of global air travel and the rise of new players in aviation are clearly challenging the competitive position of European aviation, artificial barriers to entry and protectionism should not be the way forward.”*

ENDS

* A similar letter was sent to Transport Ministers in Iceland, Norway & Switzerland.

** Regulation 847/2004 concerns on the negotiation and implementation of air service agreements between Member States and third countries.

For more information, please contact:

Robert O'Meara, Director, Media & Communications, ACI EUROPE
mobile: +32 (0)486 54 14 71 or tel: +32 (0)2 552 09 82.
email: robert.omeara@aci-europe.org

ACI EUROPE is the European region of Airports Council International (ACI), the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents more than 460 airports in 45 European countries. In 2013, our member airports handled over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe, welcoming more than 1.7 billion passengers, 16.8 million tonnes of freight and 20.8 million aircraft movements.

EVERY FLIGHT BEGINS AT THE AIRPORT.