

Strong passenger traffic growth in 2015, but freight still in the doldrums

For immediate release

5 February 2016

ACI EUROPE

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Brussels, 5 February 2016: European airport trade association, ACI EUROPE today released its traffic report for **2015**. This is the only air transport report which includes all types of civil aviation passenger flights to and from Europe: full service, low cost, charter and others.

Passenger traffic across the European airport network in 2015 grew by an average **+5.2%**.

At EU airports, the average increase in passenger traffic was **+5.6%** with airports in Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Lithuania achieving double-digit growth. Meanwhile, non-EU airports reported diminished growth of **+3.9%**. This was mainly due to a significant decline in demand for air travel across Russian and Ukrainian airports, as well as almost flat growth in Norway – despite a stellar increase in passenger traffic in Iceland and sustained growth at most Turkish airports.

Freight traffic at Europe's airports only grew by **+0.7%**, as international trade remained subdued. Aircraft movements saw an increase of **+2.2%**.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General ACI EUROPE said "2015 has been a very good year in terms of passenger traffic, with European airports welcoming an estimated 1,95 billion passengers. 20% of them achieved a double-digit increase and many broke new traffic records – mostly fueled by the continued growth of low cost airlines and selected non-EU airlines. EU airports generally performed extremely well, despite Germany and France being impacted by airline & ATC strikes and the Paris terror attacks. Remarkably, Istanbul-Atatürk airport became the 3rd busiest European airport with 61,8 million passengers, after London-Heathrow (74,9 million) and Paris-Charles de Gaulle (65,7 million). It should be noted however that small regional airports* across the continent underperformed the European average, with their passenger volume only increasing by +3,8%. This is indicative of traffic growth becoming more concentrated and less inclusive."

COMPARING 2008 AND 2015

Commenting on the air traffic recovery since the global financial crisis, Jankovec added: "While the EU economy did not even grow by +3% between 2008 and 2015, passenger traffic at EU airports increased by +13,6% over the same period. Such a wide gap is pointing to a lasting discontinuity in the usual relationship between GDP growth and passenger traffic performance. This is reflective of new market dynamics, changing consumer behaviours and the increased importance of air transport for the European economy."

CURRENT OUTLOOK

Looking at the outlook for the coming months, Jankovec concluded: "The positive momentum created by improving economic conditions in the Eurozone, low oil prices and loose monetary policy is likely to persist for most of 2016. This should help keep passenger traffic growing - except for Russian airports. However, downside risks abound, and they are mainly of a geopolitical nature – both homegrown and external. These range from the unprecedented migration crisis and its repercussions on Schengen to the UK Brexit, heightened terrorist threats, instability in the Middle East & North Africa and deteriorating prospects in emerging markets."

BREAKDOWN BY TRAFFIC CATEGORY

Over the full year, airports welcoming more than 25 million passengers per year (Group 1), airports welcoming between 10 and 25 million passengers (Group 2), airports welcoming between 5 and 10 million passengers (Group 3) and airports welcoming less than 5 million passengers per year (Group 4) reported an average adjustment **+3.7%**, **+6.3%**, **+7.1%** and **+5.5%**.

The airports which reported the highest increases in passenger traffic during 2015 (compared with 2014) are as follows:

GROUP 1: Madrid-Barajas (**+12.0%**), Istanbul IST (**+9.1%**), Amsterdam (**+6.0%**), London LGW and Barcelona El-Prat (**+5.7%**) and Rome FCO (**+5.0%**)

GROUP 2: Istanbul SAW (**19.7%**), Athens (**+19.1%**), Dublin (**+15.3%**), London STN (**+12.8%**) and Izmir (**+12.1%**)

GROUP 3: Milan BGY (**+18.6%**), Gothenburg GOT (**+18.1%**), Berlin SXF (**+16.9%**), Porto (**+16.7%**) and Glasgow (**+12.9%**)

GROUP 4: Ohrid (**+53.3%**), Ponta Delgada (**+29.5%**), Astrakhan (+26.1%), Santorini/Thira (**+87.6%**), Cluj and Timisoara (**+25.8%**)

Among the airports in the Top 5, several airports will now move to a higher traffic category for 2016.**

DECEMBER

During the month of December, airports welcoming more than 25 million passengers per year (Group 1), airports welcoming between 10 and 25 million passengers (Group 2), airports welcoming between 5 and 10 million passengers (Group 3) and airports welcoming less than 5 million passengers per year (Group 4) reported an average adjustment **+4.0%**, **+6.0%**, **+7.6%** and **+4.8%**.

The airports which reported the highest increases in passenger traffic during the month of December (compared with December 2014) are as follows:

GROUP 1: Istanbul IST (**+21.4%**), Copenhagen (**+12.4%**), Madrid-Barajas (**+9.1%**), Barcelona El-Prat (**+8.0%**) and Amsterdam (**+7.8%**)

GROUP 2: Istanbul SAW (**22.4%**), Izmir (+18.6%), Alicante (+16.8%), Prague (**+15.3%**) and Dublin (**+12.7%**)

GROUP 3: Berlin SXF (**+39.9%**), Cologne (**+22.1%**), Ibiza (+17.5%), Faro (+17.3%) and Porto (**+16.7%**)

GROUP 4: Santorini/Thira (**+154.5%**), Liege (**+73.7%**), Ohrid (**+73.3%**) Bournemouth (**+67.5%**) and Ponta Delgada (**+29.5%**)

The '**ACI EUROPE Airport Traffic Report – December, Q4 and Full Year 2015**' includes 223 airports in total representing more than 88% of European air passenger traffic.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

* In this context 'small regional airports' refers to non-capital city airports with less than 5 million passengers per annum.

****** The following airports will now move up a category in ACI EUROPE's Traffic Reporting. **Istanbul SAW** and **Dublin** both now have more than 25 million passengers a year and will be classified as Group 1 airports. **Birmingham, Budapest, Cologne-Bonn, Milan BGY and Stuttgart**, will move from Group 3 (5 to 10 million passengers a year) to Group 2 (10 to 25 million passengers a year).

The ACI EUROPE Airport Traffic Report is a dedicated service for journalists available in the password protected 'Airport Traffic Report' section of the 'Media room' on our website www.aci-europe.org. Accredited members of the media may also access additional traffic analysis and comprehensive traffic databases. For your password to access these sections, please contact us by e-mail at: maria.karananou@aci-europe.org. Your request will be validated and the password will be e-mailed to your work address.

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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 close to **500 airports** in 45 European countries. In 2014, our member airports handled over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe, welcoming more than **1.8 billion passengers, 18.4 million tonnes of freight** and **21.2 million aircraft movements**. These airports contribute to the employment of **12.3 million people**, generating **€675 billion each year (4.1%) of GDP** in Europe.*

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