



STATEMENT on Aviation Security

For immediate release

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ACI EUROPE

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Brussels, 19 April 2016: ACI EUROPE deplores the media escalation in recent weeks concerning supposed security deficiencies at Brussels Airport prior to or since the terrorist attacks of 22 March.

With a growing culture of misinformation about aviation security gaining momentum in the media, there is a clear lack of knowledge or recognition of the security regulations in place and what they cover.

Within the transport sector, airports are the most regulated and controlled spaces for security purposes. The aviation specific security regime in place at EU airports has been designed and implemented with a deliberate focus on limiting access to airside areas (non-public spaces of airports accessible only to air passengers who hold a valid boarding pass), which generally falls under the responsibility of airport operators. The security of these spaces is subject to close monitoring by national and EU authorities.

This security regime is built around the purpose of preventing unlawful interference with aircraft – a historically strategic target of terrorists for several decades. Since 2001, these aviation specific regulations have been harmonised and coordinated at EU level.

Airports only have a legal mandate for aviation security. The maintenance of law and order within the entire airport domain remains the responsibility of the police.

THE LEAKED REPORT: IRRELEVANT

We note that the security audit report recently leaked to the press, relates to an audit of the oversight capabilities of the competent Belgian authority in relation to aviation security. It is not an audit of the aviation security conditions at Brussels Airport. Therefore, the report does not contain any material indication that aviation security at Brussels Airport was deficient prior to the attacks of 22 March.

The terrorist attack of 22 March took place in the landside areas of the airport (public space with unrestricted access). Such spaces do not fall within the scope of the above-mentioned aviation security regime and are not under the responsibility of airport operators when it comes to maintaining law and order. For clarity, the policing of these spaces is regulated at national level and falls under the responsibility of the federal police and other law enforcement entities – just as for any other similar public space (in particular metro and train stations).

This means that the leaked report is irrelevant for assessing security conditions in the landside areas of Brussels airport on 22 March.

FULL TRUST IN THE CURRENT AVIATION SECURITY SYSTEM

Brussels Airport - like all EU airports - is subject to regular monitoring as regards compliance with EU and national security regulations. The current security auditing system in place means that should serious security deficiencies exist at any EU airport, they would be identified, monitored and remedied at the earliest possible opportunity.

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Along with safety, security is an absolute top priority of European airports. ACI EUROPE can attest to the existence of a strong security culture at Brussels Airport.

The airport is an active member and contributor to ACI EUROPE's Aviation Security Committee, which acts as a unique and recognised industry forum focused on raising security standards and efficiency, as well as developing expertise and promoting best practice.

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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 **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.*

EVERY FLIGHT BEGINS AT THE AIRPORT.