



Airports bullish about EU external aviation negotiations

For immediate release

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ACI EUROPE

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Brussels, 7 June 2016: ACI EUROPE - the trade association for Europe's airports - welcomes the decision taken today by the EU Council of Transport Ministers to authorise the European Commission to initiate aviation negotiations with **ASEAN, Turkey, the UAE and Qatar**.

This decision constitutes the first tangible delivery on the EU Aviation Strategy adopted by the European Commission last December¹. These negotiations should allow for the replacement of often-restrictive bilateral aviation agreements between individual EU States and ASEAN countries, Turkey, UAE & Qatar with liberal EU-level agreements, thereby opening up market access on a reciprocal basis and under common rules. Moving towards 'Open Skies' regimes is essential to airport business development. 'Open Skies' are a prerequisite for airports to develop the connectivity of their communities and provide wider consumer choice – which in turn supports economic growth and jobs².

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE commented: *"Airports have become network developers and they need full freedom to attract airlines to serve their destination. Restricting market access should no longer be allowed to constrain connectivity – and the benefits of recent aviation liberalisation at EU level with the US, Canada or other countries like Morocco are plain for all to see."*

He added *"ACI EUROPE will be at the table of these new negotiations to represent the airport industry as in the past. We look forward to swift and effective negotiations so as to allow further growth in air traffic and in connectivity. We also urge the Council of EU Transport Ministers to consider granting additional negotiating mandates as per the Commission's Aviation Strategy – including with Mexico, the other Gulf countries and Armenia."*

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¹ See our press release on the launch of the Aviation Strategy here: <https://www.aci-europe.org/component/downloads/downloads/4485.html>

² According to extensive research into the economic impact of air connectivity, carried out by InterVISTAS, every +10% increase in connectivity = +0.5% in additional GDP per capita

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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 **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.