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Airport industry chief speaks out on Security, Brexit, Open Skies & more

For immediate release

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Athens, 21 June 2016: On the occasion of the 2016 ACI EUROPE Annual Congress & General Assembly taking place in Athens today, **Augustin de Romanet**, President ACI EUROPE and President & CEO of Aéroports de Paris S.A. - Groupe ADP addressed the challenges faced by European aviation and shared his views on related policy implications.

ON SECURITY

Commenting on security, the ACI EUROPE President considered that the recent terrorist attacks in Europe and elsewhere reflect a fundamental shift in the nature of the threat we face today. The diverse and diffuse nature of the terrorist threat implies that security has become an issue not just for aviation, but potentially for any public space in our communities. This means that Europe has no other choice than to focus on better intelligence and more effective information exchange & cooperation.

Referring to airports as being only one of the last lines of defence, **de Romanet** said *"Let us be clear: efficient, robust security is not and has never been about stopping terrorists once they are at an airport. It is about detecting and stopping them before they ever reach an airport... Or a train station, or a concert hall. If they manage to get to one of these places, it means we have already lost."*

ON THE POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS OF A BREXIT

Praising the EU for refraining from imposing systematic screening at the entrance of airport terminals, he noticed the increasing understanding and acceptance that risk-based security & intelligence are fast becoming an absolute prerequisite. While this is a daunting challenge, he was adamant that this is a challenge that urgently required *"more Europe, not less of it"*. Referring to the implications of a possible Brexit, de Romanet expressed concerns that progress on the security agenda could be harder for both the UK and the EU without each other. Beyond security, he noted that *"airports thrive and connectivity grows when markets are integrated and common rules apply – which is precisely what the EU has done for aviation"*.

ON THE EU AVIATION STRATEGY

With ACI EUROPE having endorsed the recently adopted EU Aviation Strategy, the ACI EUROPE President stated: *"the main focus of the Strategy is to improve our access to emerging markets and boost Europe's connectivity. This is a very important agenda for Europe's airports, as it will allow us to secure new business opportunities and develop our route networks."* Noting the approval by EU Transport Ministers of mandates authorising the European Commission to engage in negotiations with ASEAN countries, Turkey, the UAE and Qatar for comprehensive aviation agreements, he called for timely and effective results: *"While bilateral talks will be suspended during these EU-led negotiations, it will be essential for airports to effectively gain new route development and traffic growth... within a year"*.

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And to make the most out of the opportunities presented by Open Skies, it is essential that European aviation is competitive at home also. Sufficient airport capacity is a fundamental cornerstone of this. Airport capacity constraints create costs & delays, drag down service quality and push up air fares - ultimately denying Europe precisely the air connectivity that the Commission's liberalisation efforts are all about.

ON AIRPORT INVESTMENT

Europe's airports are ready to make the investments necessary to help tackle this challenge in a cost efficient way, but to do this a rational approach towards the regulation of airport charges is needed. Multi-million euro investments in airports simply cannot be justified if those who subsequently benefit from the services and facilities don't pay their way.

Underlining how ACI EUROPE had responded to accusations made by some airlines, setting the record straight with the release of its analysis paper^o on airport investment, **de Romanet** commented *"Times have changed – and change is what the Aviation Strategy is advocating in policy terms. And yet, for all their claims of newness, the agenda of the latest European airline association – A4E on airport charges is nothing more than the old refrain: calling for airports to prop up airlines. This reflects a stubborn refusal to recognise that new market realities have also reshaped airports as businesses in their own right – and that competition is now widespread and increasing. The regulation of airport charges needs to move along these dynamics"*

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The full text of the **President's Speech** is available to download here:
<https://www.aci-europe.org/component/downloads/downloads/4686.html>

^o The ACI EUROPE Analysis Paper, **Leveraging Airport Investment to Drive the EU's Aviation Strategy** is available to download here:
<https://www.aci-europe.org/component/downloads/downloads/4680.html>

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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.*

EVERY FLIGHT BEGINS AT THE AIRPORT.