

ACI EUROPE

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Airport industry braced for multi-faceted demands of growth

For immediate release

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Muscat, 6 December 2017: The **11th ACI Airport Exchange¹** conference & exhibition takes place in Muscat, Oman this week, hosted by Oman Airports Management Company (OAMC), under the theme *“Leading airports toward operational excellence, profitability and customer service.”*

The event is staged jointly by ACI EUROPE, ACI Asia-Pacific and ACI World and combines an extensive airport services & equipment exhibition and four specialist conference streams addressing all aspects of airport management & operations.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE commented *“Airport Exchange is an event that allows us to see the cumulative trends of the past year and look through the lens of what’s coming down the line, in all aspects of the airport business. Our host, Oman Airports Management Company is at the forefront of this process, about to open a brand new state of the art facility for Muscat, with the stated ambition of being ranked among the Top 20 best airports in the world by 2020 and positioning itself as a competing hub for other major European, Middle East and Asian airports.”*

TRAFFIC GROWTH – EUROPE TO STAY NUMBER 2 WORLDWIDE

The event takes place at a time when increasing demand for air travel and connectivity is putting renewed pressure on airport facilities & staff – all in a context of increasing risks to the business, in particular due to geopolitical volatility.

Last year, Europe’s airports welcomed an additional 100 million passengers, making them the largest contributors (21.5%) to Global aviation growth, along with Chinese airports (21.6%). This year is set to be yet another record year with passenger traffic having so far increased by +8.6% (January to October).

Looking ahead, ACI is now forecasting that passenger traffic in Europe will more than double by 2040 (+112.3%), with the continent’s airports due to accommodate 4.36 billion passengers (up from 2.05 billion last year). This means that Europe will keep its position as the second largest aviation market after Asia-Pacific – with 1 billion more passengers than North America (3.36 billion) in 2040.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General ACI EUROPE commented *“The assumption that Europe is an aviation market reaching maturity with lower growth prospects needs to be reconsidered. Along with the continued expansion of Low Cost Carriers and more efficient aircraft technology, new dynamics in the travel & tourism sector will keep driving demand for air travel. This means that while exponential traffic growth is going to be the preserve of emerging markets, Europe’s airports will still have significant traffic potential – for which they will need to plan and invest accordingly.”*

CAPACITY & CONGESTION

Against that background, airport capacity looks set to be a major bottleneck for aviation in Europe. This is intensifying airports’ search for efficiency gains and innovations that can help further optimize the use of existing facilities, through changes in working culture, investment in digital technologies and more.

OPTIMISING EXISTING CAPACITY

At ACI Airport Exchange in 2008, ACI EUROPE and EUROCONTROL launched a joint-action plan for the roll-out of Airport-Collaborative Decision-Making (A-CDM) at European airports. Ever since then, the event has also served as a marker to check the progress of the roll-out of A-CDM.

There are now **26 major airports** that have fully implemented A-CDM (including electronic data-sharing with the Network Manager), delivering efficiency gains for passengers and airlines – providing the pre-requisite for airports to become ground co-ordinators³. A-CDM is also aligned with the investments being made by airports as part of the deployment of SESAR – a key component in achieving the EU's flagship aviation project, the Single European Sky.

Europe's airports have heavily focused on cost savings and efficiencies since 2008, achieving average operating cost reductions of -18.2% on a per passenger basis. However, in order to continue to deliver quality and increased airport capacity to serve the ambitious network expansion plans of airlines, more airport investment is required. This implies dealing with a host of issues – ranging from digital solutions becoming more prevalent in passenger facilitation and ever-evolving security regulations & processes, to the emergence of alternative fuel supplies, continued air traffic control modernisation and the need to invest in climate resilience.

THIS YEAR'S THEMES

For all of these reasons, the themes of this year's four dedicated conference streams are: the **Security & Crisis Management Summit**; the **Airport Operations Conference**; the **Digital Innovation & Big Data Conference** and the **Airport Development Conference**.

AIRPORTS & CARBON EMISSIONS

This year's ACI Airport Exchange also serves as the backdrop to Oman Airports Management Company earning certification for 2 of its airports, within the global carbon standard, *Airport Carbon Accreditation*. At a special ceremony during the event, **Muscat Airport** received its Level 2 Reduction certificate for the CO2 reduction it has achieved on site, while **Salalah Airport** received its Level 1 Mapping certificate, for completing extensive mapping the carbon emissions sources across the airport site.

ENDS

¹ ACI Airport Exchange is always hosted by a major airport undertaking a significant development in Europe or Asia – this year it is the brand new Muscat International Airport due to open in Q1 2018. Previous editions of the event were hosted by Hamad International Airport, Doha (2013) and Aéroports de Paris (2014) and Istanbul New Airport (2015). The year's event has attracted over 1,000 registered attendees.

² To find out more about **ACI's World Traffic Forecasts 2017-2040**, go to: <https://store.aci.aero/product/world-airport-traffic-forecasts-2017-2040/>

³ Download more information on the concept of airports as ground co-ordinators: <https://www.aci-europe.org/component/downloads/downloads/4507.html>

⁴ For the latest information on the *Airport Carbon Accreditation* and the airports in the programme, visit: www.airportCO2.org

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*ACI EUROPE represents over **500 airports** in 45 European countries. Our members facilitate over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe: **2 billion passengers, 20 million tonnes of freight** and **23.7 million aircraft movements** in 2016. 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.