



Airports call on EU to focus on sustainability & consumer interest

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ACI EUROPE

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Vienna, 4 October 2018: EU Transport Ministers, EU institutions and stakeholders from the aviation sector are meeting in Vienna for a European Aviation Summit, organized by the EU Austrian Presidency. The event is the opportunity to take stock of the EU Aviation Strategy launched in December 2015 and look at its future development.

On this occasion, ACI EUROPE restated its full support for the Aviation Strategy's focus on developing air connectivity through aviation liberalisation (open skies) and its recognition of the strategic role that aviation plays for Europe. The aviation sector supports 12.2 million jobs and contributes to 4.1% of all GDP in European countries¹. Passenger traffic at EU airports has expanded by close to 30% over the past 5 years alone, a strong indicator of the value citizens and businesses place on air connectivity.

Looking to the future, the biggest challenge for European aviation will be coping with future demand to keep creating new jobs and supporting our economy - in a situation where airports are already facing increasing capacity constraints. EUROCONTROL estimates that 160 million passengers will be unable to fly by 2040, due to a lack of airport capacity². This will result in €88 billion in foregone economic activity across our continent.

In order to effectively address this growth challenge, the EU Aviation Strategy needs to place a greater emphasis on sustainability across the board.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General ACI EUROPE said *"Both businesses and policy makers must come to terms with changing societal values. Aviation growth must not only be reconciled with the EU's environmental objectives, it must also serve wider social purposes and prove its relevance to citizens beyond its economic benefits. This means that the EU Aviation Strategy should evolve to set a clear vision, ambition and roadmap for sustainable air connectivity."*

Close cooperation with industry will be vital to successful delivery. ACI EUROPE stands ready to support the European Commission - it has already committed to develop a comprehensive sustainability strategy for the airport industry³, which it plans to launch at its Annual Congress in June 2019.

Along with citizens, air travellers must also remain the primary focus of the EU Aviation Strategy. ACI EUROPE urged the EU to continue opening up access to external markets through air traffic rights liberalization agreements and to reconsider current limitations on airline ownership and control rules.

Sustainability and consumer interest also require a greater emphasis on efficiency in the use of airport capacity and support for airport market dynamics.

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Jankovec said "*Apart from a better integration of airports into the ATM system through open data, operational efficiency requires a review of current airport slot allocation rules. These rules are no longer fit for purpose and have even been considered by the Commission as not conducive* to effective airline competition*".

Regarding airport market dynamics, Jankovec added "*Airport competition has increased both in scope and intensity over the past years, with obvious benefits in terms of enhanced direct connectivity. The airline agenda for tighter regulation of airport charges is a self-interested attempt to boost their profits and worryingly, it threatens airports' ability to develop their facilities to meet passenger and societal needs.*"

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Notes to Editors

¹ Economics data from ATAG's latest *Aviation Benefits Beyond Borders* publication:
<https://www.atag.org/component/attachments/attachments.html?id=707>

² Find out more about EUROCONTROL's latest *Challenges of Growth* forecast here:
<https://www.eurocontrol.int/publications/european-aviation-2040-challenges-growth-report>

³ Europe's airport industry commits to set new vision of sustainability
<https://www.aci-europe.org/component/downloads/downloads/5598.html>

* *European Commission, DG Competition, Case M.8633 - LUFTHANSA / AIR BERLIN, 21/12/2017*2018/60/05:
http://ec.europa.eu/competition/elojade/isef/case_details.cfm?proc_code=2_M_8633

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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. 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.