



# Europe's airports welcome the EC Green Deal

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## ACI EUROPE

10 Rue Montoyer (Box 9)  
1000 Brussels, Belgium  
www.aci-europe.org

**Brussels, 11 December 2019:** Reacting to the adoption today by the European Commission of its ambitious sustainability & climate strategy ('the European Green Deal'), the European airport industry expressed support for the pioneering and disruptive EU policy overhaul.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE, said: *"Global warming is existential. This means that it is not just an environmental or business issue, but a defining moral issue. That requires all sectors and businesses to take stock - and to embrace the transformative transition that our economy and our society must embark upon. Europe's airports stand behind the Commission's Green Deal, and we are urging EU States to support and endorse it."*

Europe's airports are already at the forefront of the transformation required for transport infrastructure. For the past 10 years, they have been working on the decarbonisation of their operations through the *Airport Carbon Accreditation*<sup>1</sup> programme. 50 European airports are now carbon neutral and close to 100 more are actively engaged in carbon management.

Last June, ACI EUROPE launched a comprehensive Sustainability Strategy for Airports<sup>2</sup> based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is fully aligned with the ambitions of the Green Deal. As part of this strategy, the European airport industry committed to Net Zero for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions under its control at the latest by 2050<sup>3</sup>.

Jankovec commented: *"Achieving Net Zero carbon emissions for airports' facilities and equipment is largely dependent on renewable energy. We must be able to either procure secure & affordable renewable energy or to produce and self-consume it. As this remains a challenge for many airports across Europe, we are extremely supportive of the Green Deal's push to accelerate the Clean energy transition."*

Looking at aviation more broadly, the Green Deal rightly points to the need to finally deliver effective ATM (Air Traffic Management) reform – as this offers a significant potential to reduce the sector's carbon footprint. Highlighting how EU States have been dragging their feet on delivering the Single European Sky, Jankovec said: *"Climate change clearly needs to be an emergency for every part of aviation. A daily flight between Barcelona and Frankfurt emits an extra 654 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> a year as a result of longer routings due to ATM inefficiencies. That's equivalent to the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from the energy used by more than 380 households over a year. That specific air route might be an extreme case - but given that there are 11 million flights using European air space every year, there is no doubt the contribution more efficient ATM can make to decarbonisation must be unlocked."*

Europe's airports also support the continuation of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) for aviation, which is addressed by the Green Deal. This must happen in a way that is complementary to the United Nations' aviation offsetting scheme (CORSIA) - a position further clarified in a paper<sup>4</sup> released today by ACI EUROPE. Indeed, the EU ETS is the carbon pricing mechanism for aviation which enables effective CO<sub>2</sub> reductions.

ACI EUROPE noted that this is not the case of taxation, which diverts resources from the sector without contributing to its decarbonisation. Given the technological challenge and the scale of investments required to achieve decarbonisation, the aviation sector will need those resources - as well as significant public support. This concerns in particular the production and uptake of Sustainable Aviation Fuels – which is the most promising solution for the sector. While the Green Deal refers to possible legislative options in this regard, strong policy incentives & financing must become a priority.

Finally, ACI EUROPE also stressed the importance of holistic approaches and policy coherence for aviation – pointing to the necessary implications of the Green Deal in areas such as State aid, airport charges & the ‘user pays’ principle and airport slots.

Jankovec concluded: *“The challenge of decarbonisation is certainly daunting, but there is no other way. Europe’s airports will continue to play their part working cooperatively with their industry partners, the EU institutions, EU States and civil society. We stand ready to contribute to the European Climate Pact and the forthcoming Strategy for Sustainable and Smart mobility.”*

**## ENDS ##**

Notes to Editors:

<sup>1</sup> Find out more about the programme at [www.airportCO2.org](http://www.airportCO2.org)  
147 European airports are currently certified under *Airport Carbon Accreditation*. These airports account for 64.3% of European air traffic. 50 of them are carbon neutral.

<sup>2</sup> The ACI EUROPE Sustainability Strategy for Airports is available [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> View the ACI EUROPE resolution to reach Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050 [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> Read the ACI EUROPE Position Paper on Aviation & Climate Action Market-Based Mechanisms [here](#).

For more information, contact:

Agata Lyznik, Communications Coordinator, ACI EUROPE  
mobile: +32 (0)494 58 69 75 or tel: +32 (0)2 552 09 89.  
Email: [agata.lyznik@aci-europe.org](mailto:agata.lyznik@aci-europe.org)

*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 46 European countries. Our members facilitate over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe: **2.3 billion passengers, 21.2 million tonnes of freight and 25.7 million aircraft movements** in 2018. In response to the Climate Emergency, in June 2019 our members committed to achieve **Net Zero** carbon emissions for operations under their control **by 2050**, without offsetting.*

**EVERY FLIGHT BEGINS AT THE AIRPORT.**