

ACI EUROPE

Boulevard du Régent 37-
40 (5th floor)
1000 Brussels, Belgium
www.aci-europe.org

DRAGHI REPORT PUTS BACK TRANSPORT ON THE RADAR SCREEN – WITH CLEAR PRIORITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Brussels, 10 September 2024: Reacting to the publication yesterday of the Draghi report on ‘The future of European Competitiveness’, ACI EUROPE endorsed its analysis of the transport sector and welcomed its proposals to tackle the challenges faced by aviation in particular.

OLIVIER JANKOVEC, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ACI EUROPE commented: *“The message from the Draghi report is unequivocal: transport is crucial for the competitiveness of Europe as it enables the prosperity of multiple parts of the economy – while also promoting social and territorial cohesion. For Draghi this applies to all transport modes including aviation. And this also comes with the recognition that as global passenger demand keeps increasing, infrastructure will need to expand so as to tackle congestion and unlock further growth. This clearly means the Draghi report stands as a rebuttal for those who think the way forward for aviation is simply to reduce demand and impose capacity caps.”*

At the same time, the Draghi report is lucid in acknowledging that decarbonisation is a precondition for transport’s future growth – with the report’s main thrust for hard to abate sectors such as aviation all about enabling its effective decarbonisation while preserving and even boosting further its socio-economic benefits. To achieve that, the report calls for more ambitious and joined-up policy along with more investment – which ACI EUROPE has long been advocating for, as reflected in its [Airport Industry Manifesto](#) released this January.

ACI EUROPE particularly supports the following proposals, which it urges the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament to act upon:

- 1. The need to improve and facilitate infrastructure planning at both EU and national level - with a particular focus not just on intermodality but also on integrating transport and energy planning.** The Draghi reports further recommends that transport should be part of the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) where Member States outline their strategies to address various aspects of the energy union, including decarbonisation.

This is especially relevant for airports, as they will need to adapt and develop their facilities to enable the deployment of both Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs) and Zero Emission Aircraft under development. This will require access to massive volumes

of green energy, which needs to be factored in energy policies and planning. The need for such planning was also one of the main conclusions of the AZEA (Alliance for Zero Emission Aircraft) released this June¹.

Recognising that the public sector cannot finance transport investment on its own, Draghi also calls for clear and stable regulation backed by “solid guarantees” to ensure that private sector capital flows into transport infrastructure.

- 2. The imperative to optimise airport capacity (“the ineffective use of airport capacity has led to major bottlenecks”) through the revision of the EU Airport Slot Allocation Regulation** along with the need to defragment airspace management with the effective implementation of the Single European Sky.

With Europe being home to more than half of the World’s most congested airports and its airlines moving towards consolidation, there is no doubt updating the 30 year old airport slot rules is a must to protect the integrity of our Single Aviation Market.

- 3. The necessity to further de-risk and finance decarbonisation solutions in hard-to-abate sectors, notably by supporting investment in aviation decarbonisation and expanding existing EU funding mechanisms.** This reflects the massive costs involved in the green transition – which the Draghi report puts at €61 billion a year for aviation.

ACI EUROPE considers that this should stand at the heart of a proper SAFs Industrial policy facilitating not just the development of SAFs but also their deployment – and involving direct funding so as to bridge the price gap with conventional fuels.

Jankovec concluded: *“Draghi has delivered what he was asked: the diagnosis and the remedies. It is now up to the EU institutions to administer the cure Europe needs to get back on track and live up to its ambitions for prosperity and global leadership. The forthcoming new Clean Industrial Deal to be presented in the first 100 days of the new Commission mandate will be the first test of their resolve to act upon this report.”*

¹ [AZEA VISION](#)

ENDS

For more information, contact:

Amy Leete
Communications Manager
Tel: +32 493 41 40 65

Email: amy.leetee@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 55 countries. Our members facilitate over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe. Air transport supports 13.5 million jobs, generating €886 billion in European economic activity (4.4% of GDP). In response to the Climate Emergency, in June 2019 our members committed to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions for operations under their control by 2050, without offsetting.