



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Calls to suspend the EU-Qatar Aviation Agreement raise serious concerns for Europe's airports, communities and economy

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Brussels, 6 February 2026: Europe's airports are deeply concerned by recent calls to suspend the EU-Qatar Comprehensive Aviation Agreement, warning that such a move would undermine air connectivity, consumer choice, and the EU's credibility on the international scene.

Like all EU Comprehensive Aviation Agreements, the agreement with Qatar was negotiated by the European Commission at the request of EU Member States, under their continuous supervision and with results they ultimately endorsed. It is fully consistent with the EU's External Aviation Policy, which is based on open and unrestricted market access, regular consultations between parties, and regulatory convergence.

This agreement has effectively enabled European airports to diversify connectivity, bringing tangible benefits to communities, consumers, and businesses across Europe.

Importantly, there is no tangible evidence that the EU Qatar agreement has resulted in Qatar Airways gaining a dominant or unfair market position at the expense of European airlines. In fact, Qatar Airways has not expanded significantly in the European market in recent years – as evidenced by the fact that the airline's seat capacity deployed in Europe in the current IATA Winter season (October 2025 – March 2026) remains -10% below its pre-pandemic (2019) level.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE commented: *"There is no question that suspending an existing EU aviation agreement would be damaging for Europe's airports, and the communities and consumers they serve. Debates over the strategy and position of airlines from the Middle East have been dragging on for years and tend to be rather sterile. In fact, the widening competitive gap between European airlines and their competitors in other World regions is mainly of the EU's own making. It is due to inadequate and damaging policies and regulations – ranging from taxation and insufficient support for decarbonisation to the failure to deliver the Single European Sky and airport capacity limitations. This only reinforces our call for an EU Aviation Strategy that delivers a much-needed aviation policy reset and ensures aviation is recognised and positioned within the EU's competitiveness agenda."*

Jankovec concluded: *"Rolling back an existing EU Comprehensive Aviation Agreement would also harm the EU's standing internationally. Such a step would potentially take Europe back to the restrictive and*

anti-competitive aviation framework of the 1950s – directly contradicting the EU’s own agenda for competitiveness and global positioning”.

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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 600 airports in 55 countries. Our members facilitate over 95% of commercial air traffic in Europe. Airports and air connectivity support 14 million jobs, generating €851 billion in European economic activity (5% 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.