



Brussels, 23 March 2020

Dear Commissioners,

Further to the requests submitted by our respective trade associations last week and following the adoption by the Commission of a comprehensive temporary State aid framework allowing for full flexibility in adopting supporting measures for those sectors and companies most impacted by the current COVID-19 pandemic, ACI EUROPE, ASA, ACA and the ETRC are hereby jointly complementing their above mentioned requests for urgent supporting measures for airport operators and service providers at airports.

You will find attached the details of the measures that should urgently be adopted by the EU/EEA and/or Member States and Switzerland to support airport operators, ground handlers, airline caterers and travel retailers.

In doing so we are calling on the European Commission to:

- 1) **Promote a *European Aviation Relief Programme* fully coordinated with EU/EEA States and Switzerland and industry stakeholders.**
- 2) **Ensure that on top of their comprehensive supporting measures to airlines, Member States also implement comprehensive, inclusive and non-discriminatory support to the entire aviation eco-system.**

Assuming current travel restrictions & flight bans would be lifted towards the end of April and followed by a gradual recovery in demand for air transport, ACI EUROPE's revised assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is for a **loss of more than 700 million passengers at Europe's airports in 2020** – representing a decrease in passenger footfall of **-28%** compared to a business as usual scenario. This represents a **€14 billion** hit in lost revenues for Europe's airport operators alone, without taking into account the **massive losses** that the other service providers at airports will inevitably incur.

For now, the fact that air traffic has nearly come to stand still across most of Europe means that airport operators and other service providers are also facing issues of operational and business continuity. These operational and business continuity issues are becoming more acute by the day.

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Besides the need for minimal operational capabilities, airport operators and other service providers at airports will also need to be in a condition to restore full operations when travel bans will be withdrawn and air traffic will restart. Together with their staff, they are as important as airlines and their staff in the delivery of air connectivity.

3) **Ensure that EU and national supporting measures adopted do not benefit one actor at the expense of another actor in the aviation ecosystem.**

In this regard, while we welcome an immediate waiver on the airport slots usage rule, its extension at this stage for the full Summer season to the benefit of airlines risks not meeting such requirement. Indeed, should the recovery happen before the end of the Summer season, the waiver will allow airlines to cancel flights for commercial or operational reasons no longer motivated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This would not just impact the revenues of airport operators and service providers at airports – but also the recovery of air connectivity and thus the wider economy.

The measures detailed in the annex below provide an extensive list of what can be done. They obviously need to be calibrated to the specific situation of airport operators and service providers at airports. But they all aim at the same objectives: addressing operational & business continuity risk before they materialize and allowing airport operators and service providers at airports to be ready when the recovery comes – so that they can, together with airlines, boost the rest of the economy.

[ANNEX: European Aviation Relief Plan & Airports](#)

We remain at your disposal.

Yours sincerely,

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Director General
ACI EUROPE

Fabio Gamba
Director General
ACA & ASA

Julie Lassaigue
Secretary General
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About ACI EUROPE (Airports Council International)

ACI EUROPE is ‘the Voice of Europe’s airports’, representing more than 500 airports in 46 countries. ACI EUROPE’s members account for over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe, welcoming 2.4 billion passengers and handling 21.2 million tons of freight. ACI EUROPE’s member airports committed in 2019 to achieve Net Zero CO2 emissions for operations under their control by 2050.

About ACA

ACA (Airline Catering Association) represents, promotes and defends the common interests of the airline catering industry. Its aim is to provide a forum for cooperation among its members and the operators in the airline catering industry, a sector worth 170,000 workers and producing 2.7bn meals per year.

About ASA

ASA is the internationally recognised trade association for the independent ground and air cargo handling industry. It represents the more than 400,000 men and women that are responsible for ensuring the safety and comfort of billions of travellers worldwide.

About the European Travel Retail Confederation

The European Travel Retail Confederation (ETRC) is the industry association for the duty free and travel retail industry in Europe. ETRC is composed of national and regional affiliated trade associations, Tax Free World Association (TFWA) representing 520 brand companies, and direct corporate membership from over 40 individual companies working in the duty free and travel retail trade across Europe and beyond. For more information about the organisation, please see our website – www.etr.org