

ACI EUROPE

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ACI EUROPE welcomes EC decision on Winter 21 slot usage threshold as a “proportionate response”

Brussels, 26 July 2021: ACI EUROPE welcomes the decision by the European Commission to set a 50% slot usage threshold for the upcoming Winter 2021 season. The [Commission’s decision](#) is a first and crucial step in the reinstatement of slot usage rules as air traffic begins to recover.

This 50% slot usage threshold revises the Commission’s previous temporary relief Regulation and reflects a cautious optimism. As vaccination rollout continues, more coordinated action in facilitating passenger travel through the EU Digital COVID Certificate and progress in providing testing ahead of travel are contributing to a gradual stabilisation and improved predictability of traffic levels.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE, said: *“The aviation sector, having been brought to its knees by the pandemic, can and must now embrace and build upon the green shoots of recovery. And whilst a return to 2019 passenger levels remains a distant vision, our ‘new normal’ does increasingly come with growing levels of stability, thanks to vaccination, certification, and testing protocols. This means that a gradual return to slot usage rules, following much needed temporary relief in a time of crisis, is now appropriate”.*

Describing the 50% threshold set in the European Commission’s Delegated Act as *‘pragmatic and proportionate’*, **Jankovec** added that the threshold could even have been considered at a higher level, but the agreed solution for W21 is a solid first step as we progress to a further increase for the Summer 22 season and an expected return to the 80/20 usage rule in Winter 22.

However, ACI EUROPE also reiterates its call for a wider review of the Slot Regulation, which is 28 years old and wholly inadequate for today’s market. Having published an [independent review](#) calling for reform just weeks before the pandemic took hold, the association points to the need to adopt new measures every season in the face of crisis as typical of its failures.

Said **Jankovec:** *“As we pick up the pieces after this systemic shock, planning certainty and the ability to invest have never been more crucial – nor have they ever been harder to achieve. Ensuring that mechanisms like the EU Slot Regulation, which should guarantee the optimal use of airport capacity, are fit for purpose should be the highest of priorities. Once the effects of the crisis on aviation have been thoroughly evaluated and lessons learned, we look forward to engaging in a root-and-branch review of the Regulation to the benefit of all”.*

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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 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.