



## Airlines and airports agree conditions for European winter slots waiver

- Severe impact of COVID-19 and continued uncertainty requires the immediate extension of the current waiver for the winter season.
- Airlines, airports and slot coordinators have agreed on conditions that ensure responsible use of the waiver.
- Industry urges the European Commission to grant a full winter season waiver now subject to these conditions.

**Brussels and Geneva, 03 September 2020** - Facing the most difficult winter season in aviation's history, airlines and airports have agreed to abide by a set of conditions together with slot coordinators under which an extension of the waiver of the "use-it-or-lose-it" rule could be applied for the entire 2020-2021 winter season. Continued uncertainty about a second wave of the pandemic and haphazard travel restrictions have caused passenger demand to plummet, leading to a slower recovery in European air transport and making the need for an extended slots waiver more urgent than ever.

To facilitate a prompt decision by the European Commission, ACI EUROPE, Airlines for Europe (A4E), Airlines International Representation in Europe (AIRE), the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the European Association of Slot Coordinators (EUACA) have agreed on [specific conditions](#) to ensure a timely return of slots not planned for use this winter. This represents a significant achievement given the extraordinary circumstances airports and airlines find themselves in.

It is now critical that the European Commission formalises an extension of the slots waiver and clarifies how the conditions will be implemented. Industry and slot coordinators require a clear signal from the Commission as to the rules of the game for the coming winter season.

*"Decisions must be made now to enable the timely return of slots for the winter season once the waiver is granted. This will give airports and airlines certainty in planning their schedules and operations and ensure that passengers know what to expect in the tough months ahead. Further delays will paralyse the winter planning process and add millions in costs for all parties,"* said Olivier Jankovec, Director General, ACI EUROPE.

*"Restoring passenger confidence is a top priority for the entire aviation sector and indeed the European economy. Given the constantly changing government restrictions, it is vital that the upcoming winter schedules provide passengers with as much predictability as possible,"* said Thomas Reynaert, Managing Director, A4E.

*"Only a full-season slots waiver will ensure that the flying of empty planes is avoided and enable flights to be operated in the most sustainable way possible. Airlines and airports in Europe stand ready to apply the agreed conditions as soon as the full-season waiver is granted and call on the European Commission to endorse this agreement and authorise the waiver immediately,"* said Rafael Schwartzman, IATA Regional Vice President for Europe.

**ENDS**

### **Note to Editors**

**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: 2.5 billion passengers, 20.7 million tonnes of freight and 25.7 million aircraft movements in 2019. 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.



**Airlines for Europe (A4E)** is Europe's largest airline association, based in Brussels. The organisation advocates on behalf of its 16 airline group members to help shape EU aviation policy to the benefit of consumers, ensuring a continued safe and competitive air transport market. Follow us on Twitter @A4Europe.

**IATA (International Air Transport Association)** represents some 290 airlines comprising 82% of global air traffic. You can follow IATA at <https://twitter.com/iata> for announcements, policy positions, and other useful industry information.

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