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Helping airports plan their recovery: Study by EUROCONTROL and partners highlights actions to improve performance when implementing COVID-19 measures

Brussels, 10 September 2020 - In order to reduce the impact of COVID-19 measures on airport performance, and so contribute to aviation's overall recovery from the pandemic, airports need to focus on reducing the impact of space constraints and national authorities need to harmonise measures across EU Member States, according to a study published today by EUROCONTROL.

The study, commissioned from the Airport Research Center (ARC), aims to help airports understand the impact of implementing COVID-19 measures on airport performance. In collaboration with ACI EUROPE and other industry partners, the study assessed the impact of these measures on terminal operations, in particular passenger journey time, terminal throughput and boarding gate processing capacity.

Eamonn Brennan, EUROCONTROL DG commented: *"This report is a valuable practical contribution to recovery. It provides airports with a detailed set of process assessments indicating where they need to focus as traffic recovers. It highlights the vital importance of harmonisation of measures for air travel, key to passenger confidence and efficiency."*

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE said: *"We are extremely grateful to EUROCONTROL for having followed our suggestion to look into the impact of COVID-19 measures on airport performance. This is a very important piece of work not just for airports but for the entire aviation system. Airport capacity issues are set to become a major constraining factor for the system when demand for air traffic picks up. This study gives a clear understanding of what lies ahead in this regard and what kind of mitigation measures need to be considered. We look forward to keep working closely with EUROCONTROL and all operational partners."*

With key inputs from ARC, ACI EUROPE and four airports/airport groups (Paris CDG, London Heathrow, Stuttgart and Swedavia), as well as the support of IATA, the ARC study used detailed simulations to model the potential effect of COVID measures across airport processes.

"Health and safety is our number one priority and the aviation industry has taken firm action to safeguard the health of travellers, staff and crew during the coronavirus pandemic. These measures, including increased sanitization and social distancing, inevitably impact on airport capacity and aircraft scheduling. We welcome this study from EUROCONTROL, which gives valuable insight into the practical impact of COVID-19 health measures and provides airports, airlines, and policy-makers with vital data for future planning. It's important we now take this information and work together to minimize capacity impacts," said Rafael Schwartzman, IATA's Regional Vice President for Europe.

The results show that, for the same passenger numbers in a pre-COVID queue,

- 50% more space is required at check-in
- 100% more space at security control
- 35-50% more space at boarding gates
- Up to 10 minutes additional time to the departing passenger journey
- 100% more space at immigration
- 30-50% more space for baggage reclaim
- 5-20 minutes additional time to the arriving passenger journey
- Additional measures are needed to mitigate impact if health checks are required for arrivals/transfers.



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The main conclusions of the study are:

- Airports need to focus on key limiting components - security control/immigration in terms of throughput challenges, and boarding gates and baggage reclaim in terms of space constraints.
- Airports already congested before the COVID crisis can expect to reach their maximum saturation capacity at just 60-75% of their peak 2019 traffic.
- To avoid further delays and conflicting requests to passengers, greater harmonisation in terms of COVID measures supporting passenger safety and re-building trust is essential across EU Member States.

Download the report [here](#).

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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.

EUROCONTROL is a pan-European, civil-military organisation dedicated to supporting European aviation. As Europe's Network Manager, we play a central coordination role, using our technical expertise to support Member States and a wide range of stakeholders (air navigation service providers, civil and military airspace users, airports and aircraft/equipment manufacturers). We strive to make European aviation safe, efficient, scalable, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable, partnering the European Union to make the Single European Sky a reality.

EUROCONTROL has 41 Member States: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. EUROCONTROL has Comprehensive Agreements with Morocco and Israel.

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