



'Fit for 55' transformative challenge requires close alignment with the aviation sector's net zero roadmap

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Brussels, 14 July 2021: Reacting to the adoption by the European Commission today of its landmark 'Fit for 55' legislative package supporting the implementation of the recently adopted EU Climate Law, Europe's airports reiterated their strong and unwavering commitment to the decarbonisation of aviation and stressed the need for closer cooperation and alignment between policy makers, regulators and the industry.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE said: *"Along with the rest of the aviation eco-system, Europe's airports want to be part of the solution and actively contribute to the decarbonisation of our economy – including mobility. Since 2009 Europe's airports have been working tirelessly on reducing their CO₂ emissions through the Airport Carbon Accreditation programme. Notwithstanding the current crisis, they reconfirmed and accelerated their net zero targets less than 2 months ago - with more than 90 airports already set to achieve net zero CO₂ emissions by 2030."*

Crucially, the European airport industry is also increasingly working on supporting and facilitating CO₂ emission reductions from aircraft using their facilities. The 'Fit for 55' package now provides a common framework and clear targets in this regard with the ReFuel EU Aviation proposal and the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation.

ACI EUROPE has been a long-time supporter of an EU-wide blending mandate requiring fuel suppliers to include Sustainable Aviation Fuels into the overall aircraft fuel supply. This is also one of the measures included in the aviation sector's DESTINATION 2050 decarbonisation roadmap² launched last February.

Europe's airports usually do not own nor operate fuel infrastructure but allow fuel suppliers to develop and operate such infrastructure on their premises. The existing fuel infrastructure at airports is fully compatible with the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels. This has already been successfully demonstrated by the deployment of such fuels at airports in Norway (AVINOR) and Sweden (Swedavia) as well as at Zurich, Munich and Clermont-Ferrand airports.

The Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation sets 2025 and 2030 as target dates for airports and ground handlers to provide electricity to stationary aircraft at the gates and remote parking stands – instead of aircraft using their own power units and burning fuel. **Jankovec** commented: *"We support this ambition and are particularly mindful of the co-benefits related to the improvement of air quality at airports that come from providing electricity to stationed aircraft. However, we remain concerned about the ability of airports and ground handlers to finance the required investment. This is going to be challenging especially for smaller airport operators, whose financial situation remains more precarious than ever. The review under way of the Environmental State Aid Guidelines will need to address this challenge, as will each Member State."*

Europe's airports also look forward to working closely with Member States on their deployment plans to support hydrogen powered and electrified aircraft operations, which will require significant investments.

Beyond airport-specific elements, ACI EUROPE stressed the need to ensure that the 'Fit for 55' proposals effectively support the European aviation sector's own roadmap to achieve net zero CO₂ emissions for all flights within and departing the EU/EEA by 2050. This means that double carbon pricing should be avoided and any proceeds from it must be used to support the development and deployment of low and zero emission aviation technology.

Jankovec concluded: "*The EU Green Deal and the 'Fit for 55' package are about delivering a new and transformative growth strategy for Europe – of which aviation must be part. Decarbonising aviation must go hand in hand with safeguarding the tremendous economic and social value that air connectivity brings to our society.*"

¹ [ACI EUROPE Press Release: Airport Industry Reconfirms and Accelerates Net Zero CO₂ Targets \(20 May 2021\)](#)

² [DESTINATION 2050 Press Release: Europe's aviation sector launches ambitious plan to reach net zero CO₂ emissions by 2050 \(11 February 2021\)](#)

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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.