



Airports and airlines call for halt to unnecessary and ineffective travel restrictions

Governments are urged to follow ECDC guidance

Brussels, 16 December 2021 – A number of countries including France, Greece, Italy and the UK have just re-introduced travel restrictions for vaccinated travellers in response to increased public health risks relating to the Omicron variant. Airports and airlines today urged governments across Europe to follow the most recent guidance from the ECDC, and take action to rescind the recently imposed Omicron-related travel restrictions where community transmissions are already present.

The [new ECDC guidance](#) published yesterday calls for urgent and strong action to slow down the spread of the Omicron variant and thus alleviate the pressure on healthcare systems and protect the most vulnerable, and rightly so.

However, with the Omicron variant now present across Europe and infections predominantly driven by community transmissions rather than travel-related cases, the ECDC acknowledges that such action no longer needs to involve travel restrictions. Governments should now focus on beefing up a range of measures aimed at directly limiting local transmissions – including avoiding large public or private gatherings, using face masks, reducing social contacts, along with expanded testing, strong contact tracing and increased vaccination.

ACI EUROPE and A4E also warned that the recent proliferation of travel restrictions puts the EU Digital Covid Certificate (DCC) at risk, eroding its very “*raison d’être*”. Effective coordination and coherence must be ensured not just within the EU, but on a pan-European level.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE and Thomas Reynaert, Managing Director of Airlines for Europe (A4E) jointly commented: “*The ECDC has always been clear that travel restrictions can only delay the introduction of new variants and that once a new variant is present across Europe and in community transmission, they no longer serve any purpose. This is exactly the point we are reaching with Omicron. Maintaining testing and quarantine requirements for vaccinated travellers will only bring hardship to the livelihoods and economies of those affected by and reliant upon the travel industry. There is no longer any corresponding health safety benefit. Knee-jerk responses contrary to expert guidance benefits no one and adds to the burden our citizens are already carrying*”.

###ENDS###

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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.

About A4E (Airlines for Europe)

Launched in 2016, Airlines for Europe (A4E) is Europe's largest airline association, based in Brussels. The organisation advocates on behalf of its members to help shape EU aviation policy to the benefit of consumers, ensuring a continued safe and competitive air transport market. With more than 720 million passengers carried in 2019, A4E members account for more than 70 per cent of the continent's journeys, operating more than 3,000 aircraft and generating more than EUR 130 billion in annual turnover. Members with air cargo and mail activities transport more than 5 million tons of goods each year to more than 360 destinations either by freighters or passenger aircraft. Follow us on Twitter @A4Europe.