Airports welcome updated health safety rules for air travel

Brussels, 11 May 2022: Europe's airports welcomed the publication today by EASA (European Union Aviation Safety Agency) and ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control) of their updated Aviation Health Safety Protocol[1], which advises European States and industry on the progressive de-escalation of protective measures aimed at limiting the risk of COVID-19 infection during air travel.

Reflecting the evolution of the epidemiological situation and risks as well as the latest scientific evidence, this updated guidance:

- Advises the alignment of mask wearing rules at airports and on-board aircraft with national rules on public transport both in arrival and departure States. This means that whenever mask wearing is no longer mandatory on public transport, this also needs to be the case at airports and on-board aircraft.

- Removes the requirement to ensure physical distancing within terminals and other airport areas.

- Removes access restrictions to airport terminals, thus allowing both passengers and all other visitors to enter and use the range of services there.

- Advises that where health checks and testing requirements remain in place, States should implement "One Stop" arrangements to avoid duplication between departure, transit and arrival processes.

Olivier Jankovec, **Director General of ACI EUROPE** commented: "*Over the past 2 years, the EASA-ECDC Aviation Health Safety Protocol has been essential to ensure risk-based and uniform COVID-19 protective measures for air travel across Europe. This remains the case with today's update, with guidelines that continue to be effective, proportionate, and practical – and which reflect the fact that an increasing number of States no longer mandate wearing face masks nor social distancing for travel*".

He added: "*This new guidance marks another step in the safe recovery of European aviation and tourism, just as demand is fast increasing and prospects for the Summer look very positive. It will make the travel experience much more pleasant and should also help to ease operations – while keeping passengers and staff safe. I would like to thank EASA and the ECDC for their continued engagement with ACI EUROPE and the rest of the industry. We urge all European States to follow and implement these guidelines.*"

[1] EASA ECDC COVID-19 Aviation Health Safety Protocol | EASA (europa.eu)

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For more information, contact:

Virginia Lee
Director, Media & Communications
Tel: +32 2 552 09 82
Email: virginia.lee@aci-europe.org

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.