

ACI EUROPE

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Statement from ACI EUROPE on proposed airport slot-use rate for Winter 2022

Brussels, 29 September 2022: Ahead of final discussions between the EU Council and the European Parliament, ACI EUROPE has today urged both institutions to fully endorse the European Commission's recommendation to return to the 80/20 airport slot usage rate for the Winter 2022-23 season.

It is imperative that the EU Council and European Parliament now agree on slot rules which truly put connectivity and consumers first - rather than the interest of a few airline groups. The Commission proposal is rational, balanced and data-driven. It grants all the necessary flexibility to airlines to keep slots they cannot use due to the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic or operational disruptions - while recognising that aviation's recovery is well under way.

The European Commission's proposal is backed up by current traffic data, strong forecasts and ample evidence of market stabilisation:

- EUROCONTROL foresees a recovery in the total number of flights of up to 90% of 2019 levels by the end of the year.
- Airline seat capacity in Europe has increased to 84% of pre-pandemic (2019) levels in Q3 this year and is projected to reach 87% in Q4.
- Several airlines including Air France¹, Iberia² and SAS³ have publicly announced strong programmes and new routes for the Winter season.

All this demonstrates high demand and a very strong recovery across the European Network, clearly negating the need for a blanket lower airport slot usage rate.

Yet, by insisting on a lower usage rate of 70% - or even less - a number of EU Member States have so far ignored market realities and chosen to side with vested airline interests at the expense of the rest of aviation, eroding connectivity and the choice available to consumers. The lower usage rate over the Summer already contributed to a 13% increase in air fares in July and August. It was also a contributing factor to congestion and operational disruptions seen at many airports.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE said: *"By allowing airlines to keep airport slots they do not operate without justification, a lower blanket usage rate would prevent other airlines from using these slots. This means wasted airport capacity, reduced connectivity, higher fares for consumers and foregone airport income. Let's call a spade a spade - this would be akin to granting a subsidy to some airlines at the direct expense of consumers and the rest of the industry. This is not what a Single Aviation Market should be about."*

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¹ [Winter 2022-2023: Air France to serve 171 destinations including 5 new routes from Paris-Charles de Gaulle | Air France - Corporate](#)

² [Iberia Plans Pre-Pandemic Flying Levels For Winter | Routes \(routesonline.com\)](#)

³ [SAS presents winter traffic program - SAS \(sasgroup.net\)](#)

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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.