



ACI EUROPE regrets 'scientifically unjustified' return to travel restrictions

ACI EUROPE

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Brussels, 31 December 2022: ACI EUROPE has today expressed regret regarding the actions of a number of States within the EU and globally for unilaterally imposing health-related travel requirements including systematic pre-departure or on-arrival testing of travellers from China.

These unilateral actions are at odds with all the experience and evidence gained over the past 3 years. The ineffectiveness of international travel restrictions in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and its multiple Variants of Concern (VOCs) has been unequivocally recognised by both the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Testing travellers from China and/or imposing other restrictions for travellers from this country is neither scientifically justified nor risk based, as expressly stated in recent days by the ECDC.

As States need to remain vigilant to the status and control of the virus, the focus should rather be on increasing genomic sequencing to be able to identify possible new COVID-19 variants and related surveillance. Such an approach, as urged by EU Health Commissioner Kyriakides in a letter sent earlier this week to Member States, does not require the testing of travellers but can be achieved by means such as the testing of wastewater from airports.

Said **Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE:** "*We are once again plunging back into a patchwork of unjustified and uncoordinated travel restrictions, which have no basis in scientific fact.*"

Clearly we still have to learn the painful lessons of the past years. These travel restrictions do not work and current arrangements for EU coordination have failed once again."

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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.