



Airport climate action results in Europe beat all expectations

Over 200 European airports engaged in climate action within Airport Carbon Accreditation, the global carbon management standard for airports

European airports outperform both the global growth and carbon savings rates

Brussels, 14 March 2023: Following the release of the *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Annual Report 2021-2022¹ today, European progress made within the global carbon standard for airports emerged as the standout star.

Having originated in Europe in 2009, the programme has consistently seen robust growth in participation of European airports year after year. In the period covered by the newly published Report, European airports outperformed the global growth factor with a **32%** increase in participation numbers, reaching **204 accredited airports** at the end of the programme year (May 2021-May 2022). Airports of all sizes, profiles and locations are counted in this number, including busy international hubs, such as London-Heathrow, Paris-CDG and Istanbul; almost all airports serving European capitals, amongst them Ljubljana, Zagreb, Madrid, Brussels, Oslo and Bucharest; all the way through to smaller, regional and business aviation airports, including Montpellier, Stuttgart and Farnborough. This momentum for airport climate action accelerated in spite of the hampered progress of the COVID-19 recovery in the European region during the period covered.

Airports in Europe have also topped the ranking of the highest number of airports at the more advanced levels of accreditation – **Levels 3+ (Neutrality) and 4/4+ (Transformation/Transition)**, with **68 airports in the region** holding accreditation at these levels by the end of the reporting year out of the 89 holding it globally. These levels require airports to align their carbon management and reduction trajectory with the

¹ The 2021-2022 *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Annual Report is available to download on the following [page](#).

objectives of the Paris Agreement, according to which global warming should be limited to below 2°C and ideally 1.5°C. Their creation back in July 2019 marked a step-change in the programme's ambition level, laying the ground to accompany airports of all sizes and locations to reach Net Zero CO₂.

European airports also outperformed the global average in carbon performance, registering a **-11.9% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 CO₂ emissions compared to the global reduction rate of -8.1%**. The total reduction achieved amounted to **-242,626 tonnes of CO₂**. This amount is equivalent to the CO₂ emitted during the production of close to 36 million cotton t-shirts².

Kurt Vandenberghe, Director General, DG Climate Action, European Commission

commented: "It is important that all parts of the economy take action to tackle climate change and reduce their emissions. We welcome that airports are proactive in reducing their own emissions. Airports acting to reduce their climate impacts are showing outstanding action from their place within a sector that will only become more and more visible in terms of its impacts on climate change. Airport Carbon Accreditation, by having airports work their way up through multiple levels of certification, brings together individual efforts and leads to significant actual emissions reduction collectively. The programme has had a leadership effect, as airlines, air traffic controllers, retailers, passengers, and surface transport and other companies at airports are now also getting involved to lower their climate emissions on the ground.

I congratulate ACI EUROPE on the momentum they have achieved – a credible industry-led climate change initiative that began in Europe, and which has now expanded to bring broader action from airports across the Globe."

Olivier Jankovec, ACI EUROPE Director General said: *"Against a challenging backdrop of a stop-start COVID-19 recovery and volatile operating environment, I am delighted by the ongoing momentum for airport climate action demonstrated in the results published today. European airports are leaders in carbon management globally, leaving no stone*

² The production of one cotton t-shirt emits approximately 6,75 kg of CO₂, according to data from the Carbon Trust – link to [data source](#).

untuned in the effort to rid their infrastructure and operations of carbon, in line with the global climate goals and the ambitious climate agenda spearheaded by the EU.”

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Media contact

Agata Lyznik
Communications Manager, ACI EUROPE
Tel: +32 2 552 09 89
Email: agata.lyznik@aci-europe.org

Notes for Editors

Airport Carbon Accreditation is the only institutionally-endorsed, global carbon management certification programme for airports. It independently assesses and recognises the efforts of airports to manage and reduce their carbon emissions through 6 levels of certification: 'Mapping', 'Reduction', 'Optimisation', 'Neutrality', 'Transformation' and 'Transition'.

Through its 6 levels of certification, *Airport Carbon Accreditation* acknowledges that airports are at different stages in their journey towards comprehensive carbon management. It is a programme for airports of all sizes, extending beyond hubs and regional airports with scheduled passenger traffic, to include general aviation and freight-focused airports.

Find the full list of accredited airports and more information about the programme here:
<https://www.airportcarbonaccreditation.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.