



ACI EUROPE

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ACI EUROPE Best Airport Award winners for 2023 revealed

Barcelona, 28 June 2023: The Annual **ACI EUROPE Best Airport Award** winners were announced yesterday during the Gala Dinner of the ACI EUROPE / World Annual General Assembly, Conference and Exhibition. Hosted by Spanish airport operator Aena, the ceremony, which recognised more outstanding performers than ever before, took place in the stunning MNAC – National Museum of Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain.

The Best Airport Awards are an opportunity to recognise excellence, top achievements and thought leadership across an entire range of airport activities and for airports of all sizes and profiles. As the industry continues to shape its vibrant, post-pandemic future, this year's awards have emphasised key topics such as sustainability, innovation, operational efficiency and resilience. These awards are divided into five groups based on 2019 passenger traffic (under 5 million, 5-10 million, 10-25 million, 25-40 million, and over 40 million).

An additional five special category awards are also given to honour outstanding performance in the areas of Accessibility, Digital Transformation, Eco-Innovation, Human Resources and World Business Partner.

The winners and highly commended airports were selected by an expert panel of judges comprising representatives from Aviation Advocacy, ECAC, the European Commission, Flight Global, International Airport Review, the International Transport Forum and SESAR 3 Joint Undertaking. Several awards submissions were evaluated in partnership with other organisations, with the Accessible Airport Award reviewed in partnership with the European Disability Forum and the Eco-Innovation Award evaluated by the *Airport Carbon Accreditation* Advisory Board.

ACCESSIBLE AIRPORT AWARD

Winner: Alicante Airport

This award recognises the most accessible airport for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. ACI EUROPE partnered with the European Disability Forum to identify the airport making the greatest progress in providing accessible services and removing barriers for travellers. Judges also consulted with national Disabled

Persons' Organisations (DPO's) and, together, chose **Alicante Airport** as the clear winner, having gone above and beyond the minimum accessibility requirements set by the EU Regulation 1107/2006. The airport has developed innovative tools and services relevant to PRMs such as providing means to contact assistance directly with the airport rather than only the airline, offering an electric wheelchair charging area, developing mobile apps to facilitate navigation for visually impaired passengers inside the airport, and setting up specific PRM lanes for security and passport controls. The airport has further impressive measures planned such as the construction of a sensorial room for hidden disabilities.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AWARD

Winner: Prague Airport

ACI EUROPE partnered with the SESAR 3 Joint Undertaking to deliver this award, recognising a European airport that has embraced digitalisation and adopted innovative technologies and procedures to improve safety, capacity, efficiency and sustainability. Submissions were required to provide details of how they are implementing a solution that matches the SESAR vision of the Digital European Sky. This year's winner was **Prague Airport** which impressed the judges with its exemplary digital transformation achievements, having deployed several SESAR solutions. It has adapted these to its local needs and benefited from adopting the latest digital innovation and technologies, such as machine learning and data integration. This approach has been rewarded with significant increases in the airport's operational safety and efficiency.

Rome Fiumicino Airport was also highly commended in this category.

ECO-INNOVATION AWARD

Winner: Gatwick Airport

This next award was presented in association with the *Airport Carbon Accreditation* programme to highlight an airport that has demonstrated exceptional environmental performance. To compete for the award, applicants needed to provide details of an innovative project in one of the subdivisions of Climate Change, Noise Management, Biodiversity and Wildlife Management or Circular Economy. **Gatwick Airport** was chosen as the winner because of its ambitious Biodiversity Action Plan, notably emphasising a 'net gain' approach and zero use of herbicides by 2030. Biodiversity is of huge importance for airports and the environment, and Gatwick Airport's initiative also reflected the positive engagement of both employees and the local community.

Vienna International Airport was also highly commended in this category.

EXCELLENCE IN HUMAN RESOURCES AWARD

Winner: Bologna Airport

ACI EUROPE's Excellence in Human Resources Award was created in close partnership with the ACI EUROPE Leadership and HR Forum. Recognising that Human Resources management is crucial for the strategic development of an airport, the award honours an airport HR department that is implementing first-class practices and processes to develop the industry's workforce. This year, special focus was placed on the social pillar of sustainability. Winning in this category was **Bologna Airport**, which judges praised for the excellent alignment of its human management strategy and business strategy, creating a positive synergy between the two. The airport's Sustainability Plan had a people-centric pillar, emphasising HR initiatives with a multi-faceted approach incorporating training, mobility care, diversity, equality, well-being and other key issues.

Prague Airport was also highly commended in this category.

WORLD BUSINESS PARTNER AWARD

Winner: Smiths Detection

This award recognises an ACI EUROPE World Business Partner, either individual or company, that has made significant contributions to the industry. It is an important acknowledgement of the extensive efforts and work the WBP community provides to ACI EUROPE, and the value that comes through their active participation in committees, sharing of best practices, research, special initiatives, and of course, financial contributions. The winner, **Smiths Detection**, was selected by the ACI EUROPE Board for its active participation in the Aviation Security Committee's work for over a decade. This WBP has also been in the vanguard from a manufacturer's perspective in supporting and driving the adoption of Open Architecture within Security Systems.

IN THE UNDER 5 MILLION PASSENGERS CATEGORY

Joint winners: Madeira Airport and Menorca Airport

Joint winners were announced for this category. Both **Madeira Airport** and **Menorca Airport** showcased exceptional performances, particularly in their post-pandemic recoveries; with Madeira Airport adding new airlines and routes, and Menorca Airport reaching its historic traffic record in 2022. Madeira Airport was also praised by judges for its commitment to sustainability, coupled with its significant investments to improve accessibility and passenger experience, for instance by creating a Care Team. Menorca Airport was highlighted for its impressive commitment to smooth access for everyone, improvements in readiness and sustainability measures, and its investments in innovative technologies.

IN THE 5-10 MILLION PASSENGERS CATEGORY

Winner: Milano Linate Airport

This award went to **Milano Linate Airport**, which has excelled in its sustainability efforts with the achievement of Level 4+ of *Airport Carbon Accreditation* and its commitment to achieving net zero by

2030. The judges commended its passenger-centric approach with a dedication to providing seamless and secure passenger travel by investing in innovative solutions such as Explosive Detection Systems for Cabin Baggage (EDS-CB) equipment and FaceBoarding services.

IN THE 10-25 MILLION PASSENGER CATEGORY

Winner: Helsinki Airport

Winning this category was **Helsinki Airport** whose strong sustainability story and industry-leading commitment to achieving net zero by 2025 made it the clear front-runner. The airport has improved its resilience and operational efficiency by successfully consolidating two terminals into a single terminal facility, a challenging undertaking.

Porto – Francisco SA Carneiro Airport was also highly commended in this category

IN THE 25-40 MILLION PASSENGERS CATEGORY

Winner: Athens International Airport

The winner of this award was **Athens International Airport**, which received strong praise from the judges for its focus on operational resilience and its bold corporate sustainability strategy. With an impressive ambition to be net zero by 2025, its innovative "ROUTE 2025" strategy aims to produce energy on-site using photovoltaics to cover 100% of the airport's electricity needs.

Brussels Airport and **Avinor Oslo Airport** were also highly commended in this category.

IN THE OVER 40 MILLION PASSENGERS CATEGORY

Winner: Rome Fiumicino Airport

The winner of this category, **Rome Fiumicino Airport**, has innovation and sustainability at the heart of its ambitious strategy to achieve net zero by 2030. Through its investment in an Innovation Hub, the airport plans to fund projects like the "Innovative Cabin Crew". Cooperating with internal and external stakeholders, including start-ups and other enterprises, it continues to foster creative problem-solving. The airport was also the first in the world to issue a sustainability-linked bond, a pioneering solution in achieving sustainability commitments.

iGA Istanbul Grand Airport, Barcelona El-Prat Airport and **Madrid-Barajas Airport** were also highly commended in this category.

ENDS

Photos from the Best Airport Awards Ceremony 2023 are available for download via the following link: <https://we.tl/t-4IMYCHLd3a>

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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.