



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UK support for sustainable airport expansion set to boost its economy and global position

ACI EUROPE

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Brussels, 29 January 2025: ACI EUROPE applauded today's decision from the UK Government approving capacity expansion at London Gatwick and London Luton airports and also supporting capacity expansion at London Heathrow Airport.

Olivier Jankovec, ACI EUROPE Director General said: *"With this decision, the UK Government is seizing the power of air connectivity as one of the key levers for boosting the country's economy and reinforcing its global position. With every 10% increase in air connectivity yielding a 0.5% gain in GDP and 1.6% rise in employment, allowing airports to expand where needed to meet future demand is all about effectively supporting wider economic activity — in particular trade, inward investment and tourism. This is both highly relevant and timely, considering the new era of global geoeconomic competition we now face. Ultimately, this is about futureproofing the country."*

While all airport expansion projects must adhere to a strict regime of environmental permits and, in the specific case of the UK, to the Climate Change Act, there is no escaping the reality that the UK Government's support for airport expansion must come hand in glove with full support for aviation decarbonisation — in particular as regards the production and affordability of Sustainable Aviation Fuels and airports' access to renewable energy.

Looking at the wider European context, Jankovec concluded: *"The UK decision should also be a wake-up call for the EU. The Draghi report is all about the imperative of competitiveness and growth to achieve our climate goals — and it is unequivocal about the fact that as global passenger demand keeps increasing, infrastructure will need to expand so as to tackle congestion and unlock further growth. Yet, we see a number of EU countries focused on limiting capacity at their major airports — jeopardising not just their own economic prospects but also those of the bloc."*

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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. Airports and air connectivity support 14 million jobs, generating €851 billion in European economic activity (5% 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.