# Air traffic off to a great start in January, passengers up 8.9%, freight 8.4%

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**Brussels, 13 March 2017:** European airport trade association, ACI EUROPE today releases its traffic report for **January 2017** – the first indication of airport traffic performance in Europe from the start of this year.

Average **passenger traffic** in geographical Europe grew by **+8.9%** during January, compared with the same period last year. Much of this growth related to the EU market, where the pace (**+10%**) was nearly twice that of the non-EU market (**+5.4%**).

All national markets across the **EU** reported positive figures, with 14 of them posting double digit growth – predominantly in Central & Eastern part of the bloc, along with Cyprus (+25%), Luxembourg (+23.1%), Malta (+27.3%), the Netherlands (+12.1%) and Portugal (+21.7%). Accordingly, the following capital airports recorded impressive growth in passenger traffic: Sofia (+43%), Warsaw-WAW (+30.5%), Bucharest OTP (+23.8%), Tallinn (+21.8%), Prague (+21.7%), Ljubljana (+21.5%), Vilnius (+17.8%) and Budapest (+17%).

The performance of the **non-EU market** continued to be affected by the political situation in Turkey. While passenger traffic at Turkish airports had shown encouraging signs of recovery towards the end of 2016, it fell again sharply in January (-6.4%). Conversely, Russian and Ukrainian airports pursued a dynamic recovery, as illustrated by the performance of Rostov (+38.3%), Kiev (+36.3%), St Petersburg (+29.8%), Novosibirsk (+29.7%), Ekaterinburg (+23%) and Moscow-SVO (+19.1%). Iceland posted yet another record in terms of growth rate, with Keflavik airport increasing passenger traffic by +70% - meaning the airport is now welcoming more than twice the traffic volume of January 2015 (+113.8%).

**Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE** said *"2017 is off to a rather booming start for air traffic, confirming the momentum which gradually built up in the second half of 2016. The performance of the EU market is especially impressive, with January passenger volumes up by nearly a quarter over the past 2 years. Coupled with solid gains in freight traffic, this primarily reflects much improved macro-economic conditions - especially in the Eurozone where unemployment is at its lowest in 8 years and the economy has recorded 14 consecutive quarters of growth."*

In line with last year, secondary hubs & medium sized airports tended to lead the growth dynamic in January. However, both the top 5 European hubs ('the Majors') and smaller regional airports registered improving performances – resulting in an overall more balanced dynamic for passenger traffic across the industry.

**The Majors** saw passenger traffic increasing just over +2% in January (compared to an average of +1.5% in 2016), on the back of better results at Paris-CDG (+6.1%) and Frankfurt (+1.8%) - as well as further gains at capacity constrained London-Heathrow (+4.2%). Amsterdam-Schiphol kept leading the league (+11.2%), which overall results were dragged down by a sharp drop at Istanbul-Atatürk (-12.5%).

Meanwhile, passenger traffic at **smaller regional airports** (Group 4 airports, excluding capital cities) grew by nearly +10% - almost closing the gap with larger ones.

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**Freight traffic** was also a positive story, with the metric continuing its recent upward trend during January at +**8.4%. Aircraft movements** were up **+4.8%** - reflecting solid airline capacity expansion.

Concluding, **Jankovec** commented *"Geopolitical risks, although increasing and very much on the radar, are mainly affecting the non-EU market for now. The impact of last year's terror attacks in the EU has receded but the consequences of Brexit have yet to reveal themselves. This could well be as good as it gets…"*

During the month of **January**, airports welcoming more than 25 million passengers per year (Group 1), airports welcoming between 10 and 25 million passengers (Group 2), airports welcoming between 5 and 10 million passengers (Group 3) and airports welcoming less than 5 million passengers per year (Group 4) reported an average adjustment **+5.8%**, **+11.4%**, **+13.1%** and **+11.7%**.

The airports which reported the highest increases in passenger traffic during January 2017 (compared with January 2016) are as follows:

**GROUP 1:** Moscow SVO (**+19.1%**), Manchester (**+18.1%**), London Gatwick (**+12.1%**), Barcelona (**+11.4%**) and Amsterdam (**+11.2%**)

**GROUP 2:** Warsaw WAW (**+30.5%**), St Petersburg (**+29.8%**), Berlin SXF (**+26.5%**), Prague (**+21.7%**) and Lisbon (**+21.6%**)

**GROUP 3:** Keflavik (**+70.0%**), Kiev (+**36.3%**), Larnaca (**+33.3%**), Malta (**+27.3%**) and Faro (**+25.4%**)

**GROUP 4:** Bucharest BBU (+**309.8%**), Oradea (**+148.3%**), Maribor and Zakynthos Island (+**88.7%**), Iasi and Mikonos (**+83.7%**) and Palanga (+**81.8%**)

The '**ACI EUROPE Airport Traffic Report – January 2017** includes 233 airports in total representing more than 88% of European air passenger traffic. ACI EUROPE Airport Traffic Reports are unique in that they are the only ones to include all types of airline passenger flights to, from and within Europe: full service, low cost, charter and others.

**## ENDS ##**

**Notes to Editors**

On 26 January 2016, an air traffic control strike took place in France, resulting in the cancellation of Approximately 1,000 flights that day. These flights represented less than 1% of total flights that month.

The ACI EUROPE Airport Traffic Report is a dedicated service for journalists available in the password protected 'Airport Traffic Report' section of the 'Media room' on our website **www.aci-europe.org**. Accredited members of the media may also access additional traffic analysis and comprehensive traffic databases. For your password to access these sections, please contact us by e-mail at: **maria.karananou@aci-europe.org**. Your request will be validated and the password will be e-mailed to your work address.

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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 45 European countries. These airports contribute to the employment of* ***12.3 million people****, generating* ***€675 billion each year*** *(****4.1%****)* ***of GDP*** *in Europe.*

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