

## **COVID-19 & AVIATION**

### **European Aviation Relief Programme**

ACI EUROPE is calling on the EC, the EU/EEA States and Switzerland to urgently define and enact a *European Aviation Relief Programme*, which:

1. **Recognises that the COVID-19 is having an unprecedented impact on the entire aviation sector** - including airlines, airports, ground handlers, airport concessionaires (such as travel retail and Food & Beverage operators).
2. Provides for supporting measures for the aviation sector that are **non-discriminatory & balanced** and preserve the **integrity of the Single Market**. This means that:
  - Supporting measures must be provided for **all affected actors**.
  - **No measure should benefit one actor at the expense of another one** – as would be the case if airports were required to lower & forego the payment by airlines of airport charges. Given the risk to airports' cash flows and the need to safeguard airports' long-term strategic investment & decarbonization efforts, this must be clearly ruled out.
3. Ensures **full and effective coordination at EU level with the involvement of the industry**. An ad hoc coordination/consultation fora at EU level under the auspices of the European Commission could be established for that purpose.
4. Prioritises **business continuity & addresses liquidity shortfalls** while also allowing for the **compensation of damages caused by the exceptional circumstances that COVID-19 entails**.

As part of this *European Aviation Relief Programme*, ACI EUROPE is calling for the following airport-specific measures:

1. **Airports are eligible for compensation of damages suffered from the current crisis under Article 107(2)(b) of the TFEU. EU/EEA States and Switzerland will need to act accordingly and ensure these damages are compensated – and also avoid the risk of operational & business discontinuity due to cash flow issues.**

In addition due and urgent consideration needs to be given in the on-going **evaluation of the 2014 State aid guidelines** to the need to ensure that operating aid will remain possible for airports after 2024 – given the lasting & structural impact that the COVID-19 pandemic will have on the aviation market and airport economics in particular.

2. **An immediate suspension of national, regional, local taxes & fees specific to the aviation sector – inclusive those levied upon airports.**
3. **Urgent adoption by the Council & European Parliament of the EC proposal to waive the 'use-it-or-lose-it' rule for airport slots until 30 June 2020.** Any consideration for further extension should be based on authoritative data and consulted with the airport industry and slot coordinators.

4. **Maintaining innovation support through EU funding mechanisms.** Advance payment of Horizon 2020 funding for projects that have been launched and are due to be delivered in the next 12 months, with a view to ensuring that liquidity is maintained throughout the project and until delivery.
5. **Regulatory stability.** Under the present circumstances, airports more than ever need regulatory stability and legal certainty.