



Europe's aviation industry is facing an unprecedented liquidity crisis -- the European Union must act now!

In light of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, Europeans are no longer able to travel. Thousands of aircraft in Europe are grounded – requests for ticket refunds are outnumbering new flight bookings, tourism hot spots are empty, and airports across the continent have come to a standstill.

Sadly enough, the catastrophic effect COVID-19 is having on the aviation industry is clearly only at the beginning stages. The organisations representing all stakeholders of the air travel value chain and air transport ecosystem in Europe, including Airlines for Europe (A4E), Airline Catering Association (ACA), Airports Council International (ACI EUROPE), Airport Services Association (ASA), The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA), European Regions Airline Association (ERA), EU Travel Tech (EUTT) and European Travel Retail Confederation (ETRC), welcome the initiatives of the European Commission which remind us that solidarity and responsibility are the guiding principles of the Union. However, better coordinated and proactive actions are urgently required to support the industry and aid in its future recovery, specifically:

- **Member States must provide financial support as quickly as possible to the whole travel ecosystem.** There is currently a cash liquidity issue at every level of the air travel ecosystem. . **To face this liquidity crisis,** it is crucial that all actors and supporting measures are considered on a non-discriminatory basis.
- The current crisis exceeds all foreseeable and manageable expectations. **The European Institutions must take all the necessary measures to ensure the short-term financial viability of the travel industry enterprises** with the objectives of maintaining a functioning travel industry, protecting employees and consumers alike, and help them to efficiently restore air connectivity and support the re-growth of European economies.
- The crisis affects the entire travel ecosystem and coordination is crucial. **It is essential to set-up an organised consultation procedure, flexible and informal as in the tourism industry, to exchange updated information, address urgent issues and draw up lines for mid and long-term solutions.**

We welcome the initial actions from the European Commission in targeted areas such as state aid, recognising that entire markets are non-functioning and urgent aid is needed. The aviation sector is a strategically important sector. It must be positioned as a critical enabler of Europe's economic recovery once the crisis has passed.

As a reminder, aviation represents more than 12 million jobs and some €800 billion in European economic activity. That is 3.3% of all employment and 4.1% of all GDP in European countries¹. Beyond its economic importance, air transport is a major contributor to the social cohesion and cultural values of Europe. The freedom of movement of citizens and goods sits at the core of the European project and would not be a reality without air transport.

Europe's citizens, communities and visitors will see its vibrance restored more rapidly if the air transport sector can quickly recover, once the COVID-19 health crisis has passed. No small part of this depends on governments providing firm supportive measures today.

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¹ ATAG Aviation Benefits Beyond Borders estimates:

<https://aviationbenefits.org/downloads/aviation-benefits-beyond-borders/>