

**ACI EUROPE**

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# As EU air passenger traffic continues to tumble, the impact of blanket travel restrictions is laid bare

*"The UK is now working on a progressive and coordinated restart of international travel. We are anxious to see the EU follow suit" says ACI EUROPE chief*

**Brussels, 25 February 2021:** On the day that more than 60 travel and tourism bodies issued a [plea to EU Tourism Ministers](#) for a coordinated route out of industry paralysis, ACI EUROPE is making public the numbers which show the full impact of blanket travel restrictions.

Fresh data from ACI EUROPE, representing over 500 airports in 46 countries across the wider European footprint, highlights the stark impact of current travel restrictions – in particular the blanket advice against all non-essential international travel both within the EU and externally, as well as to/from the UK.

Accordingly:

- In the first two weeks of February, the decrease in passenger traffic at **EU/EEA/Swiss/UK airports** stands at **-89%** (versus 2020) – **with airports in the UK (-92%), Germany (-90%) and the Benelux (-90%) reporting the sharpest declines**
- Conversely, **airports in the rest of Europe<sup>1</sup>** have seen their passenger traffic show the beginnings of improvement, with a **-60%** hit in early January creeping up to **-55% in the first two weeks of February**
- Overall passenger volumes across the **wider European airport network** decreased from **-70%** last year to **-83%** as of mid-February – a clear downward trend
- As of 14 February, Europe's airports had already lost **182 million** passengers since the start of the year – of which **157 million** have been lost by EU/EEA/Swiss and UK airports.

Along with falling passenger traffic, February is also seeing a continued decrease in our air connectivity – which is so crucial to the recovery of our economies. The number of air routes lost within and from Europe further increased to **6,914** this month from **6,663** in January and **6,001** last November.

**Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE,** said: *"The figures we are making public today lay bare the continued collapse in air traffic and air connectivity, they also point to a travel and tourism sector in agony. As the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines is set to accelerate in the coming months, the EU and Governments across Europe must start planning for a*

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia & Hercegovina, Georgia, Israel, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Turkey.

*progressive and coordinated restart of international travel in time for the Summer season.*

*"The UK is now working on this through its Global Travel Task Force with a target date set for 17 May. We are anxious to see the EU follow suit, starting with the set-up of a dedicated Task Force for the Restoration of Free Movement of People, as just suggested by the travel and tourism sectors. This should include the establishment of vaccination and testing certificates for travel purposes, as championed by the Greek Government. We are still very far from effective EU and wider international coordination – yet, this is an absolute must to save both lives and livelihoods".*

**## ENDS ##**

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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. Our members facilitate over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe: **2.5 billion passengers, 20.7 million tonnes of freight** and **25.7 million aircraft movements** in 2019. In response to the Climate Emergency, in June 2019 our members committed to achieve **Net Zero** carbon emissions for operations under their control **by 2050**, without offsetting.*