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## **ACI EUROPE rebuts IATA's misguided statements on airport capacity delivery**

**Brussels, 19 December 2024:** Responding to recent statements by IATA on airport capacity delivery and the future of airport slot regulation, ACI EUROPE expressed incredulity at several significant misconceptions articulated by the airline lobby.

The diagnosis presented in IATA's White Paper on Airport Capacity is irrefutable: **Europe's airport capacity crunch has returned in full force** following the COVID-19-induced lull. The scarcity of airport capacity is already undermining the EU's efforts to address its competitiveness gap. The Draghi report is indeed unambiguous about the need to address this major bottleneck resulting from underdeveloped airport capacity — and its ineffective use.

However, the "cure" proposed by IATA represents yet another instance of shifting blame onto other stakeholders within the aviation ecosystem, rather than adopting a constructive and effective approach to alleviating the problem.

**Olivier Jankovec, ACI EUROPE Director General**, stated: *"IATA's assumption that many airports are not doing enough to squeeze more capacity out of their existing infrastructure is ludicrous. Airports are responsible and economically-driven businesses — with both their business and social mandates resulting in a strong focus on maximising the use of their facilities. The wealth of technological innovation and the optimisation of physical infrastructure that airports are investing in to achieve this goal — in partnership with the entire aviation ecosystem — is testament to this fact."*

Maximising capacity use directly impacts airports' ability to generate the revenues needed to sustain their operations and investments. This, in turn, enables the development of vital air connectivity.

However, airports have limited control over how their capacity is used by airlines, leading at present to significant capacity wastage. This harms connectivity and prevents competitor airlines from utilising that latent capacity — a situation stemming from a 30-years old EU Airport Slot Regulation which urgently needs to be revisited. The Draghi report correctly identifies the impediments to competitiveness caused by this outdated legislation.

In its [Airport Capacity Position Paper](#) just released last month, ACI EUROPE precisely reiterated its call for modernising the EU Airport Slot Regulation to ensure better use of available capacity. These rules must evolve to maintain a competitive environment in conditions of limited slot turnover and to preserve and enhance connectivity.

**Jankovec** added: *"Airlines should rather focus their efforts on the numerous ways they can directly improve airport capacity use – such as returning unused slots to the pool more quickly and refraining from hoarding slots that could otherwise be utilised. It is, of course, in the airport's interest to declare the highest capacity realistically available to foster competition among airlines, maximise connectivity for passengers and increase airport revenues. The undue pressure on airports to make promises on capacity that cannot be fulfilled due to physical constraints is yet another attempt by IATA to deflect blame onto others and defend the status quo when it comes to Airport Slot Regulation."*

**## 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 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.