



State aid: Commission approves award of slots at Lisbon airport to easyJet following TAP Group's restructuring

Brussels, 16 June 2022

The European Commission has ranked easyJet first among the air carriers that have applied for the portfolio of up to 18 daily slots at Lisbon airport. The slots will be made available by TAP Air Portugal to mitigate possible undue competition distortions created by the restructuring aid it received from Portugal, as approved by the Commission in [December 2021](#). As a result of today's decision, easyJet will be able to start operating new routes as of 30 October 2022.

Executive Vice-President Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Following an open procedure, easyJet will obtain 18 of the daily take-off and landing slots currently held by TAP at Lisbon airport. This will encourage competition in the European aviation sector, as it will enable easyJet to expand its activities at this congested airport, contributing to fair prices and increased choice for European consumers. This also helps ensure that the financial support given to TAP by Portugal to allow the carrier to return to viability has no undue negative effect on the Single Market."*

TAP Air Portugal's slots commitment

On [21 December 2021](#), the Commission approved €2.55 billion Portuguese restructuring aid in favour of the TAP Group, including TAP Air Portugal. The aid was approved under the Commission's [Guidelines on State aid for the rescue and restructuring of companies in difficulty](#), subject to conditions that included a package of measures for streamlining TAP Group's operations, reducing its costs and limiting distortions of competition.

The package included a measure related to Lisbon airport, where TAP Air Portugal has a strong presence. The airport is structurally highly congested, meaning that airlines cannot get access to the take-off and landing slots that they request for their operations. TAP Air Portugal therefore committed to transfer up to 18 slots per day at Lisbon airport to a competing carrier, to enable the lasting entry or expansion of a competing carrier, to the benefit of consumers. A Monitoring Trustee was appointed by the TAP Group to monitor this slots commitment.

The award of the slots to easyJet

Under the slots commitment, the Commission has to approve the competing carrier to which TAP Air Portugal's slots are made available, following a transparent and non-discriminatory procedure. On 25 February 2022, the Monitoring Trustee published a call for proposals, to which a number of interested carriers replied.

The Commission, assisted by the Monitoring Trustee, has assessed in detail the proposals received against the eligibility, evaluation and ranking criteria set out in the Commission decision of 21 December 2021. The Commission has ranked the proposals based on the seat capacity that carriers would offer using the slots made available by TAP Air Portugal.

Based on this assessment, the Commission has ranked easyJet's proposal first. easyJet has now priority to conclude with TAP Air Portugal the agreement for the slot transfer that will allow easyJet to expand its operations at Lisbon airport and offer new flights as of 30 October 2022.

Background

easyJet is a European low-cost airline with leading positions at primary airports in Europe. It is one of the largest airlines in the world, with 308 aircraft, operating 927 routes across 34 countries and 153 airports.

TAP Air Portugal is a Portuguese flag carrier. As the largest airline based in Portugal, it is a major provider of mobility services for passengers and cargo in the mainland, the Autonomous Regions of Madeira and Azores, as well as for Portuguese-speaking countries and diaspora communities. The company plays a key role in the growth of Portuguese tourism and economy as a whole and is a significant employer in Portugal.

Under the Commission's [Guidelines on rescue and restructuring aid](#), Member States may support companies in difficulty, under certain strict conditions. In particular, for restructuring aid to be approved, the restructuring plan must ensure that the viability of the company can be restored without continued State support, that the company contributes sufficiently to the costs of its restructuring and that distortions of competition created by the aid are addressed through compensatory measures, including in particular structural measures.

A non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under case number SA.60165 in the [State aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. New publications of State aid decisions on the internet and in the Official Journal are listed in the [Competition Weekly e-News](#).

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