

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 AND NEED FOR ACTION IN EUROPEAN AVIATION JOINT APPEAL TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS AND THE MEMBER STATES

This declaration is being made on behalf of the following organisations that are part of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Civil Aviation:

- Air Traffic Controllers' European Union Coordination (ATCEUC)
- Airlines for Dialogue (A4D)
- Airline Coordination Platform (ACP)
- Airport Council International – Europe (ACI Europe)
- Airport Services Association (ASA)
- Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation – Europe (CANSO Europe)
- European Cockpit Association (ECA)
- European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)

Summary

The signatories call upon the EU institutions and Member States

- to enforce the EASA information bulletins and safety directives as well as establish further coordinated hygienic protocols
- to enable connectivity and use travel bans only as a last resort
- to promote economic measures including state aid to retain the integrity of the sector, protect the workers from unemployment and loss of income and abolish taxes to aid the sector's future recovery
- to support the relaxation of the slot allocation rules
- to reaffirm the key role of social dialogue at European, national and company level

The importance of European aviation to society is multifold: it provides significant economic¹ contributions, as well as builds connectivity – within the EU and towards the rest of the world.

Because of the effects of COVID-19, the sector is currently facing an unprecedented crisis both at European and global level. To bring the industry and its employees through this crisis and ensure a smooth recovery, the signatories set out their joint demands and requirements.

It is unclear how long the crisis will last and when the demand for airline services will return. To combat the current challenges and ensure a swift recovery, clear and immediate action is needed. In the short-term, measures need to concentrate on public health and the protection of workers and passengers. In the medium and long term, however, the European institutions and the national governments need to set a vision for aviation and its staff – in airlines, airports, ground handling services, air traffic management and all other sub-sectors.

¹ According to Commission data, aviation supports close to 5 million jobs and contributes €300 billion, or 2.1% to European GDP (source: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air_en)

Therefore, the signatories demand urgent action from the European institutions and the national governments in the following domains:

Ensuring the health and safety of the staff and the passengers

The measures taken so far by the European Aviation Safety Agency, including safety information bulletins and safety directives are highly welcome and should facilitate a coordinated approach of Member States. Moreover, coordinated hygienic protocols should be established for aviation-related activities outside of the EASA remit.

Ensuring the air connectivity

With the precondition that the health and safety of staff and passengers are protected, the airspace in the European Union needs to remain open, notably to enable a minimum connectivity, emergency services and repatriation flights. Governments should only consider travel bans and other measures interfering with air connectivity as a very last resort and for the shortest possible time.

Economic measures and protection of workers

The European institutions and national governments need to ensure the integrity of aviation as a whole so that when the immediate crisis is over, operations can resume as quickly as possible. The signatories fully support the measures published by the European Commission on 13 March 2020², including the state aid and fiscal framework flexibility as well as the protection of workers from unemployment and loss of income. Such measures need to include the self-employed and those with precarious jobs. Aviation taxes at EU or national level should be abolished to aid the sector's future recovery.

Relaxation of slot allocation rules needs to be implemented immediately

The signatories welcome the announcement by the European Commission (EC) to grant airlines a temporary waiver on the "use it or lose it" airport slots regulation whereby air carriers must use at least 80% of their allocated slots within a given scheduling period.

Role of social dialogue

The signatories reaffirm the role of social dialogue and social partners as enshrined in the Treaties, as a key instrument – at European, national and company level – to jointly address the challenges of this crisis and to support the process towards a healthy and thriving industry once the crisis is over, for the benefit of society, the traveling public as well as for their staff members and their employers.

Volker Dick, ATCEUC President

Matthew Krasa, A4D Director

Hans Ollongren, ACP Director

*Olivier Jankovec, ACI Europe Director
General*

Fabio Gamba, ASA Director General

*Tanja Grobotek, CANSO Director Europe
Affairs*

*Philip von Schöppenthau, ECA Secretary
General*

Livia Spera, ETF Acting General Secretary

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_459