

## EU Transport Ministers finally start to recognise looming airport capacity crunch

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### ACI EUROPE

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**Brussels, 3 October 2007:** Following the Transport Council's conclusions of 2 October on the European Commission's communication on airport capacity, efficiency and safety, ACI EUROPE appreciates the recognition by EU Transport Ministers to deal with the airport capacity crunch at European level, given its wide ranging negative impact.

However, Europe's airports note that the contemplated actions at EU level remain predominantly focused on the optimisation of existing airport capacity and do not provide the necessary incentives to create new infrastructure indispensable to avoid severe congestion problems.

Olivier Jankovec, ACI EUROPE Director General, said: "Optimising capacity is already a priority for airports across Europe as they strive for ever more efficiency. But, this will be far from sufficient to cope with traffic demand over the next 20 years. Airports must be permitted to plan, finance and build in time the new facilities that are needed to respond to airlines' and passengers' needs. This is a prerequisite not only for the competitiveness of Europe's aviation industry, but also for that of Europe's economy, in line with the Lisbon Strategy."

Not effectively addressing the airport capacity issue will have a knock on effect on the environment as congestion on the ground results in increased emissions from aircraft waiting to land or take off. Jankovec added: "This shows the need for airport capacity to become a priority issue for the EU transport policy, along with Air Traffic Management reform. The expected 12% reduction in aircraft emissions from the Single European Sky project will be jeopardized if we fail to provide enough airport capacity."

Noting that the Transport Ministers referred to the recommendations of the High Level Group for the future European Aviation Regulatory framework - which expressly recognised the insufficiency of optimising existing capacity, called for the profile of airport capacity to be raised on the EU agenda based on tangible initiatives and advocated an integrated ATM/airport approach - ACI EUROPE urges the European institutions act upon these recommendations without further delay.

**ENDS**

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*Airports Council International (ACI) is the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents some 400 airports in 45 European countries. Member airports handle 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe, welcoming over a billion passengers each year.*