



Press release

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European governments must follow US lead on airport security funding

Brussels, 27 November 2003: The US Senate has this week given its approval to the 'FAA Reauthorization Bill' - providing USD 500 million for airport security improvement projects. This means that since July 2003, the US government has granted over a billion dollars to US airports to help pay for anti-terrorist security measures. In contrast, European governments have so far refused to bear the costs for such measures, which aim at the protection of society in general. European airports today call on European governments to follow the lead of the US government in helping airports fund the massive costs associated with civil aviation security.

Philippe Hamon, Director General, ACI EUROPE: "The US air transport industry is clearly enjoying a significant competitive advantage against its European counterparts. Not only are many of the airport security personnel at US airports on the federal payroll, but the US government has paid over a billion dollars since July 2003 to compensate airports for the cost of anti-terrorist measures. In contrast, European governments have failed to agree how to standardise contributions towards the funding of an improved post 9/11 security regime."

Due to the impact of recent geopolitical events, airport security procedures have been - and continue to be - substantially revised and extended. So far, the European airport industry has been faced with hundreds of millions of euro in costs for such additional security measures, and it is expected that such costs will continue to grow. Application of these crucial new procedures entails the purchase of sophisticated technology, implementing major infrastructural changes, employing additional resources and further staff training.

Philippe Hamon, Director General, ACI EUROPE: "These costs must not be passed directly onto airports and air passengers. Rather, the financing of new security measures must be shouldered by governments. Only governments have the moral duty to pay for public protection against terrorism, so as to preserve the substantial social and economic benefits of aviation. We therefore call on individual governments to take immediate action and to give their airports vital assistance with the financing of these additional security measures."

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Airports Council International (ACI) is the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents over 450 airports in 45 European countries. Member airports handle 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe, welcoming over a billion passengers each year.