

Brussels, 27 April 2020

Open letter to EU Transport Ministers
ahead of the EU Transport Ministerial Meeting of 29 April 2020

Dear Transport Ministers,

Ahead of your meeting on 29 April, Airlines for Europe (A4E) would like to share a series of important points for your consideration. As you know, European aviation is one of the sectors most heavily impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, and we will feel its effects for years to come.

Further financial and regulatory support is urgently needed at an EU level:

- To boost the resilience of the European airline industry going forward;
- To facilitate a return to normal operations (“RNO”) without unnecessary legal, regulatory or operational impediments.

A4E welcomed the “**Joint European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures**”, adopted on 15 April by the European Commission and Council. We share a common goal of restoring air connectivity in Europe and ensuring that passengers can travel safely and with confidence. The health of travellers, airport employees and flight crews alike should be a guiding priority for all of us when flights are resumed.

The upcoming EU guidelines to restore air transport services, connectivity and free movement should follow five additional principles:

1. **Cooperation and coordination** between Member States and all industry representatives is essential in order to maintain the Single Aviation Market and ensure a level-playing field.
2. **Harmonisation** of measures and regulations at a European – if not global level, are needed in order to ensure mutual recognition amongst countries.
3. Measures and regulations must be **proportionate** by reflecting the actual risk levels.
4. Resumption of international operations should take place in a **gradual manner**, using an adjustable set of standards which reflect the degree of risk of a particular connection.
5. **Social distancing** is neither necessary nor viable on board an aircraft.

A4E is collectively working towards a restart strategy, called “Reconnect”, which aims to regain passengers’ trust in the global European air transport system. To that point, processes, targets and responsibilities should be defined unambiguously and coordinated at a European – if not global – level, fostering a gradual return to normal operations. Any

measures linked to the COVID-19 pandemic should remain temporary in nature, its cost be borne by the States, and be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure their effectiveness and impact on travellers, and on airlines.

From an operational perspective – and in order to allow a gradual return to normal operations – A4E airlines call on EU Transport Ministers to:

- Recognise that aviation is an international business, therefore coordination of measures at a global level is encouraged, and should be mandatory at a European level;
- Leverage the expertise of the responsible organisations and industry associations to ensure full coordination;
- Acknowledge that – while maintaining a global coherence - there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution for transport in general, and aviation in particular. Measures should be risk-based and proportionate to the individual mode of transport, and these measures should be financed by the States;
- Ensure that biosafety measures are performed by those best placed to ensure their effectiveness;
- Guarantee passengers have access to a sufficient supply of personal protection equipment (PPE);
- Support clear risk-based guidelines on the criteria to allow certain groups of passengers and individuals to travel internationally;
- Promote the application of common international processes for the aviation workforce;
- Safeguard the continuity of air cargo operations by maintaining exceptional measures as long as needed;
- Ensure that all measures implemented by Member States remain of a temporary nature and are constantly assessed;
- Maintain flexibility in the measures so that they can be increased/reduced according to health restrictions and needs.

As the health and economic crisis continues to evolve, we remain at your disposal to discuss these points in more detail at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Thomas Reynaert,
Managing Director, Airlines for Europe