

A4E Commits to Developing Sustainability Targets to Better Support EU Goals; Calls for Smart Policies and Tailored Research & Development Initiatives

- **New study reveals European airlines have saved 20 million tonnes of CO2 emissions since 2014 (equivalent to 1.6 million intra-EEA* flights, or 100 days of flying)¹**
- **Implementing the Single European Sky would lead to at least a 10% reduction in CO2² emissions**

Brussels, 06 March 2019 – At their Annual General Meeting today, A4E airline CEOs agreed to identify sustainability targets which would help the EU meet its environmental goals. A4E, together with the wider EU aviation industry, will also lead in the development of a roadmap in order to define how a combination of measures and appropriate policies could help Europe’s aviation industry fulfill its sustainability commitments.

“While we remain committed to the industry’s self-imposed global targets, our members believe EU airlines – and Europe as a whole, can go further to lead the way in developing a roadmap towards sustainable aviation. Aircraft fuel efficiency levels have improved by 2% a year in Europe and this should be recognised. But further significant progress can be made if current research and development initiatives, such as electric and hybrid engine technologies, and sustainable alternative fuels, were better funded and if the right political decisions were taken to remove the hurdles in place”, said Thomas Reynaert, Managing Director, Airlines for Europe (A4E).

Since 2014, EU airlines’ own technical and operational measures have saved some 20 million tonnes of CO2 emissions, according to a new study*. That is the equivalent to 1.6 million intra-EEA flights, or 100 days of flying.

At the same time, inefficiencies often leave Europe’s airspace congested, preventing airlines from flying the most environmentally friendly routes. According to the study, ATC strikes, technical failures and related operational inefficiencies have led to one million tonnes of avoidable CO2* emissions since 2014 -- on top of the additional emissions generated by not implementing the Single European Sky initiative. Improving Europe’s airspace architecture, e.g. through harmonised and more widespread implementation of Free Route Airspace (allowing airlines to fly their preferred trajectories) – and adapting airspace design to traffic flows would lead to at least a 10% decline in CO2, thereby contributing towards making air transport even more sustainable in the future.

“Simply put, these disruptions and inefficiencies undermine current efforts. They represent roadblocks to EU airlines’ future sustainability targets and must be urgently dealt with. Governments have a shared responsibility to act by allowing new, more efficient operational concepts to take hold. The industry needs more support for our efforts to reduce dependency on fossil fuels”, Reynaert added.

With a greater utilisation of sustainable fuels and further fleet modernisation, airlines already have promising solutions to reduce aviation’s climate impact over the next 10-15 years. To fully benefit from these solutions, current airspace inefficiencies must be urgently addressed, for example through greater digitalization of air navigation services and an

¹ SEO Economics/To70 study summary: “Environmental impact of disruptions and airspace inefficiencies in Europe”, February 2019.

² Source: “The Roadmap for delivering high performing aviation for Europe, European ATM Master Plan, Edition 2015”

overhaul of Europe's airspace architecture. An effective combined effort from all operational stakeholders and decision makers is essential to properly address environmental challenges.

About A4E

Launched in 2016, Airlines for Europe (A4E) is Europe's largest airline association, based in Brussels. The organisation advocates on behalf of its members to help shape EU aviation policy to the benefit of consumers, ensuring a continued safe and competitive air transport market. With more than 700 million passengers carried each year, A4E members account for more than 70 per cent of the continent's journeys, operating more than 2,900 aircraft and generating more than EUR 110 billion in annual turnover. Members with air cargo and mail activities transport more than 5 million tons of goods each year to more than 360 destinations either by freighters or passenger aircraft. Current members include Aegean, airBaltic, Air France-KLM, Cargolux, easyJet, Finnair, Icelandair, International Airlines Group (IAG), Jet2.com, Lufthansa Group, Norwegian, Ryanair, TAP Air Portugal, Smartwings and Volotea.

***Notes to editor:**

- EEA: European Economic Area
- Link to SEO Economics/To70 study summary: "Environmental impact of disruptions and airspace inefficiencies in Europe", February 2019
- [Link to A4E Seamless European Sky Backgrounder](#)