A4E Urges EU to Make Aviation a Future Political Priority

- Lack of airspace capacity, ill-suited policies and need for greater support on sustainability challenges are sounding the alarm bell for EU action
- Improvements in Europe's air traffic management (ATM) system, reform of EU passenger rights legislation and the regulation of airport charges would benefit passengers
- Timely opportunity for EU leaders to ensure aviation's long-term success

Brussels, 06 March 2019 – At its third-annual Aviation Summit, A4E called on the EU to take decisive action on several crucial aviation policy issues that continue to negatively impact European airlines and their passengers, among them: Europe's inefficient air traffic management system, outdated passenger rights legislation and reform of the EU Airport Charges Directive.

"At a time when some doubt the benefits of European integration, A4E is issuing an urgent call for future decision makers in Brussels and across European capitals to elevate aviation policy to a critical priority for the next five years. This urgency can no longer be ignored or left to wishful thinking", said Thomas Reynaert, Managing Director, Airlines for Europe (A4E).

"Wishful thinking will not increase the efficiency of the EU's airspace and ensure consumers do not see their travel plans unpredictably disrupted. Wishful thinking will not enable the more than 2 billion passengers that are projected to be flying in Europe in 2040 to benefit from efficient and cost-related air services. The new European Parliament and Commission will be decisive in shaping the future of air travel in Europe, and A4E is committed to working constructively with them to deliver on an ambitious vision for our aviation industry, our passengers and European businesses", Reynaert added.

 "The Single Market in aviation is one of the major achievements of the European Union, but progress on aviation has stalled and we are going backwards. The EU must tackle inefficient ATC monopolies through internationalisation of airspace, introduction of competition between ATC providers, and quicker delivery and flexible deployment of air traffic controllers. Airlines are doing everything possible to protect their passengers from another year of record delays and cancellations due to Europe's mismanaged airspace. The EU must take responsibility to fix these fundamental problems rather than endlessly talking about them", said Michael O'Leary, Ryanair CEO and A4E Chairman.

A4E's vision focuses on the safe, efficient and sustainable movement of passengers and goods throughout the region.

In order to meet these challenges, the EU must:

- Ensure that Member States take measures to minimise the impact of disruptions on the movement of people and goods across Europe, both in the air or on the ground

- Revise Regulation 261/2004 in order to establish a clear, proportionate and stable legal framework on air passenger rights

- Steer clear of quick fixes to pressing and complex environmental challenges – focusing instead on helping air transport reduce its dependency on fossil fuels by supporting research and development initiatives

- Ensure that ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) will be the only CO2 tackling measure applicable to emissions from international flights within Europe as of 2021

- Protect consumers by ensuring that aviation does not become a cash-cow for national governments and monopoly providers

- Revise the 2009 Airport Charges Directive to ensure that monopoly airports stop driving up the cost of flying in Europe

In addition, governments must urgently take concrete action to realise the principles of a seamless European sky for their citizens, allowing the EU to finally implement the Single European Sky initiative. Member States must implement the European Commission's recommended 2017 mitigation practices to address air traffic control strikes

Looking ahead towards the next European Parliament and Commission term, A4E invites the candidates and political groups to support its call for action. The "Call for the Future of Air Travel in Europe" is available on the A4E website.

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.