

## A Call for the Future of Air Travel in Europe

In May 2019, European citizens will vote for a new European Parliament, indirectly nominating at the same time the next European Commission. This new EU leadership will be decisive in shaping the future of air travel in Europe. A4E is committed to working constructively with stakeholders in Brussels and in the Member States to deliver on an ambitious vision for the aviation industry, passengers and businesses across Europe.

The Single Market in aviation is one of the major achievements of the European Union. It has provided citizens with vast choices and low airfares. In no small part, aviation contributes to the strengthening of ties between citizens, businesses, and governments across borders, materialising the cornerstones of European integration – the free movement of people and goods. A continued growth of aviation which produces economic benefits and contributes to European environmental targets is one of the industry's most important objectives.

The urgency to make the bold political decisions that will help European aviation meet these objectives for the benefit of passengers and businesses that rely every day on air connectivity, is far greater today than it already was in December 2015 when the EU adopted its Aviation Strategy. Yet, as for every past European election, the risk is great for decision makers to be tempted by immediate political gains at the loss of more meaningful, and necessary, long term policies. For air travel, this risk is very real – despite the immense opportunities that lie ahead to deliver for all Europeans.

At a time when some doubt the benefits of European integration, and with growing concerns across Europe about mobility, connectivity and sustainability, **A4E is issuing an urgent call for decision makers in Brussels and across European capitals to elevate aviation policy to a critical priority for the next five years.** This urgency cannot be ignored and left to wishful thinking.

Wishful thinking will not increase the efficiency of the EU's airspace and ensure travellers do not see their 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.

In order to achieve this:

- The EU must ensure that Member States take measures to minimise the impact of disruptions to the movement of people and goods across Europe, both in the air or on the ground
- 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, without losing sight of long-term, sustainable solutions, must implement immediately the European Commission's recommended mitigation practices put forward in 2017 to address strikes from air traffic controllers
- The EU must steer clear of quick fixes to pressing and complex environmental challenges – focusing instead on helping air transport reduce dependency on fossil fuel by supporting research and development initiatives
- The EU must ensure that ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) will be the only CO<sub>2</sub> tackling measure applicable to emissions from international flights within Europe as of 2021

- The EU must protect consumers by ensuring that aviation does not become a cash-cow for national governments and monopoly providers
- The EU must revise Regulation 261/2004 in order to establish a clear, proportionate and stable legal framework on air passenger rights – third parties should not be allowed to profit on the back of passengers
- The EU must revise the 2009 Airport Charges Directive to ensure that monopoly airports stop driving up the cost of flying in Europe, and start focusing on their customers rather than on their shareholders

European airlines' vision for the sector remains focused on the safe, efficient and sustainable movement of passengers and goods throughout the region. Together with policymakers across Europe, airlines aim to enhance this mobility for future generations of travellers eager to reap the benefits of a successful, competitive aviation market.

#### **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.