

Brussels, 17 September 2024

Commissioner-designate for Sustainable Transport and Tourism

Dear Apostole,

Congratulations! You've gotten the WhatsApp letting you know you have been designated Commissioner for Transport. Welcome on board.

As a fellow Greek, I know what it's like to leave the Mediterranean skies and coastline behind and to relocate to Brussels. Let's be honest, sun is not what we come to the heart of Europe for, as the familiar sounding voices will remind you as you walk past the many Greek cafes nestled near the Berlaymont.

The job you have been offered is important: transport is the glue that keeps Europe together. It is transport and more specifically aviation, that got you here in the first place.

As you prepare to face the European Parliament and settle into your office at the Berlaymont, here's your flight plan from Airlines for Europe.

Your mission

Transport is important. Millions of Europeans depend on it every single day. The report from Mario Draghi lists transport among the competitive strengths of the EU. It also points to “a persistent lack of EU integration and low competition” that continue to affect capacity and connectivity across Europe. We need to fix this.

We know aviation is a transport mode that is very hard to decarbonise. Our [Destination 2050](#) Roadmap sets out the path for European aviation to contribute to the climate transition while still meeting the connectivity demands of European citizens. However, “decarbonisation is also a competitive disadvantage for the hardest-to-abate transport modes” such as aviation, as Mario Draghi also says. In our sector, decarbonisation will require 61 billion Euro of investment every year between 2031 and 2050.

We trust this Commission will be pragmatic and focused on delivering competitive air transport for a connected Europe. Europe's aviation sector must remain strong, also in the face of global competition.

Competitive aviation for a connected Europe

- We must continue reforming European airspace, looking beyond the agreed framework known as SES2+. The 20% reduction in European airspace capacity due to the war in Ukraine has exacerbated existing challenges, and the current air traffic

management system is no longer fit for today's reality. Work with us all to improve this.

- We need to streamline environmental legislation and ramp up the production of alternative technologies and fuels. Europe has the most ambitious mandates on sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs), yet a true industrial strategy to produce these fuels is missing. This must be rectified if we want to avoid disproportionate costs on European aviation. Any levies on aviation should aim to incentivise decarbonisation and should be reinvested back into the sector.
- We will support you in the effort to align international climate and environmental standards with those of the EU, to tackle the leakage of carbon and business to the EU's neighbourhood.
- Now more than ever, we need to complete the single market for aviation. We need to give legal clarity and certainty for consumers and airlines by reviewing and rebalancing the current framework for passenger rights. We need to achieve efficient multimodality and clarify the roles and responsibilities of each transport actor involved, including intermediaries. We need to review airports legislation so that it provides for more transparency and more effective oversight, letting all players compete openly and fairly.

The way Forward

Other issues are likely to arise over the term of your mandate. On many of these issues, you will need to work closely with colleagues from other sections of the Commission so that you and the rest of the College can deliver for Europe.

Buckle up as you get set to captain Transport for Europe for the next 5 years, we look forward to flying together for our future.

Ourania Georgoutsakou
Managing Director
Airlines for Europe

