

November 2020

Aviation Round Table Report on the Recovery of European Aviation

**Urgent call for action
from the assembled
European aviation sector**



Organisations endorsing the report



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Urgent call for action from the assembled European aviation sector

We, the European associations collectively representing the entire European aviation sector, including airlines, airports, air navigation service providers, aeronautical manufacturing, trade unions, non-governmental organisations for environmental and consumer action, service providers, ground-handling services, the duty free and travel retail sector, airport coordinators, general and business aviation, express carriers, travel agents, tour operators, travel distributors, and the entire tourism sector, have come together in the European Aviation Round Table because the gravity of the crisis threatening aviation in Europe calls for unprecedented action.

We are gathered today to launch our joint proposals for the recovery and relaunch of our sector towards and in a post-COVID-19 world. With this appeal, we call upon all policy makers in the EU and its Member States to take swift and decisive joint action to save our sector.

Recognising the vital socio-economic role played by aviation and tourism in Europe and around the world, allowing companies and nations to trade successfully, providing jobs and regional and global connectivity by fostering social contacts between people, societies and communities worldwide;

Recalling that the EU aviation sector supports almost 10 million jobs and €672 billion in European Union economic activity, including 4.2% of all EU jobs and 4.2% of the EU's GDP;

Stressing that aviation is a key economic sector which has been hit first and hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis, which is having an unprecedented and devastating impact and which necessitates urgent action to stabilise the sector and put it back on a path towards a sustainable recovery and future, operationally, financially, socially and environmentally;

Recognising that the aviation sector cannot merely wait for a resumption of business as usual and that urgent action is required so that aviation can continue to be a primary enabler of our global economy in the future;

HEREBY call for a bold strategy for a sustainable recovery of European aviation and to this effect herewith present the main elements of our proposals:

To **restore the public's confidence** in air travel we need **first and foremost effective coordination of travel restrictions and requirements imposed by Member States**. Such measures should be based on a common set of criteria, data and guidelines provided by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

We all declare our readiness to take all measures necessary to strengthen the confidence of the travelling public in aviation. This includes support for further improvements to the effective enforcement of passenger rights, as ensuring legal certainty in this area and in regard to travel restrictions is paramount to avoid confusion and passenger frustration. The European aviation sector also calls on the EU and Member States to prepare, implement and enforce simple and unambiguous rules in that field.

Pillar 1: European Aviation Relief Programme

The Aviation Round Table calls on the EU and its Member States to **put in place a targeted European Aviation Relief Programme covering the period until the recovery of air traffic, which is not expected before 2024 or 2025**. This programme should aim to stabilise the sector and help to prevent the huge loss of employment and connectivity that would result from a collapse of European aviation. The EU aviation sector stands ready, with the EU and Member States, to continue to take

action to mitigate the revenue gap of affected actors and allow for a fast and sustainable recovery path which will enable the sector to contribute to an economically viable and sustainable recovery.

Given the current uncertainty over when the recovery will come, **the Aviation Round Table welcomes the recent prolongation of the State Aid Temporary Framework until 30 June 2021 – but a prolongation until at least the end of 2021 is needed, taking into account the long-lasting impact of the pandemic on the sector and the need to preserve the Aviation Single Market.** The Aviation Round Table also calls for the introduction of specific support measures for the aviation sector beyond 2021.

In the interests of achieving a broad-based recovery and the level playing field vital to the European aviation market, Member States should ensure that any further **relief funding is provided on a fair and non-discriminatory basis** and available to all parts of the aviation sector with justified needs.

The EU Recovery and Resilience Facility may provide indispensable support for such Relief Programme. In the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, **Member States should reflect and recognise the strategic importance of aviation.**

The EU and Member States should continue to promote a competitive EU aviation industry globally, including through EU negotiated bilateral and multilateral aviation agreements where added value and economic benefits have been demonstrated for the EU aviation eco-system, as well as consumers, based on fair competition and high standards in areas such as safety, consumer protection, environment and social rights.

The present crisis risks eroding air connectivity, which is an economic and social lifeline for many communities. It should therefore become easier for Member States to create new **Public Service Obligations** (PSO), assisted by a targeted funding programme. Temporary emergency PSOs urgently need to be expanded to take into account the long recovery period.

The EIB Group's lending policies, the EU taxonomy for sustainable finance, EU and national programmes should all allow support for financing the transition to low-emission technologies across the entire aviation eco-system.

Pillar 2: EU Pact for Sustainable Aviation

The Round Table agreed that the long-term sustainability of the aviation sector requires a balance between the environmental, social and economic impacts of human activity and therefore we invite the EU and its Member States to join us in defining and agreeing, by the end of 2021, an EU Pact for Sustainable Aviation.

The European aviation sector believes that its recovery is fully compatible with, and should be accompanied by, broader efforts to reduce its environmental footprint, provided the right policies are in place. Therefore, **the European aviation sector is committed to continue its efforts to reduce its negative environmental impacts, both locally and globally. The latter implies in particular for all stakeholders and all policy-makers to work together to achieve net zero CO2 emissions from all flights within and departing from the EU by 2050.** This means that by 2050, emissions from these flights should be reduced as much as possible, with any residual emissions being removed from the atmosphere through negative emissions, achieved through natural carbon sinks (e.g. forests) or dedicated technologies (carbon capture and storage). The European aviation sector invites European and national policy-makers to be strong partners in reaching these objectives, thus collectively contributing to the implementation of the European Green Deal.

The EU Pact for Sustainable Aviation should chart the path towards net-zero CO2 emissions, while also achieving significant emission reductions by 2030, so as to strongly contribute to the EU Climate Action objectives. It should also consider the feasibility of making 2019 the peak year for CO2 emissions from European aviation while enabling the sector to continue delivering its social and economic benefits. Many decarbonisation initiatives, such as those related to electrification, will also benefit local air quality.

Flowing from these and other environmental objectives, all parts of the aviation sector undertake to align their commitments accordingly. The Pact should specify the supporting policy framework and financial mechanisms needed at EU level to achieve these objectives. Amongst others, this should include the urgent need for a **comprehensive EU legislative framework to promote the uptake and deployment of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs), as a key opportunity to accelerate the decarbonisation of aviation.**

Technology and innovation will play a key role in improving the environmental performance of our sector post-COVID-19. The EU should therefore **establish a green incentive scheme for fleet renewal coupled with retirement and increase public co-funding rates for Civil Aviation Research & Innovation (Clean Aviation and SESAR) through EU recovery mechanisms.**

Recognition should also be given to the revision of the Single European Sky and the continuation of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme / CORSIA, which will also contribute towards cutting aviation emissions.

The pandemic has had a profound impact on workers in the aviation sector, and the design and implementation of the recovery strategy should take into account needs accordingly, fully reflected in **the social dimension of the EU Pact for Sustainable Aviation.**

Through the Pact, the EU, its Member States and the aviation stakeholders should ensure that social and employment rights enshrined in European and national legislation are applied effectively for all workers. Of particular importance will be **effective oversight and enforcement of the social acquis.** Equally, there is a need to combat any forms of social injustice or other abuses in the aviation sector.

With a view to attract and retain skilled workers and closing the gender gap in certain professions within the aviation sector, the industry should ensure **secure and fair working conditions** that also provide for adequate work-life balance.

To guarantee a socially sustainable industry there is a need to ensure that the bilateral and tripartite social dialogue structures are used effectively. The aviation sector commits to using these mechanisms to the fullest possible extent, not only during periods of crisis, as required by law, but also during 'normal' times.

In sum, the Pact should benefit the entire sector – passengers and workers - both from an environmental as well as a social perspective.

In addition to the significant challenges covered by the above two pillars, a number of other issues facing the sector should also be addressed to **strengthen the resilience of European aviation** beyond the crisis. Indeed, the sector, as well as the EU and Member States, should collaborate to improve the EU aviation system's resilience by tackling its inefficiencies, strengthening its governance and improving its flexibility as well as its overall international competitiveness.

Digitalisation is a prerequisite for the modernisation and decarbonisation of the EU aviation system and the sector will fully embrace it. The Single European Sky and its upcoming revision plays a crucial role in stimulating digital innovations. The EU should **prioritise funding for the full SESAR cycle** of the Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) programme (including research and innovation, industrialisation and deployment) in the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027. The EU should **temporarily increase the ATM research partnership and SESAR deployment funding rates** to 100% for aviation stakeholders to ensure continuity for existing projects and adapt regulatory processes to accommodate disruptive technologies, namely new entrants including unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and unmanned traffic management (UTM) operations.

We, the European associations representing the entire European aviation eco-system, call upon the EU and its Member States to provide the necessary support and regulatory frameworks to enable us to implement the proposed actions as detailed in the Report which we drafted jointly to this end and which we add to this Declaration.

