ACI EUROPE releases new analysis hitting back at airline accusations

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- The Top 21 airports in EU & EFTA invested over **€53 billion** (2005-2015)
- Significant increases in airport **capacity**, **quality & connectivity** for Europe
- ACI EUROPE says A4E figure of +80% increases in charges is false
- Actual figure is **+25.4% - equivalent to less than €3 per passenger**

Brussels, 9 June 2016: European airport trade association ACI EUROPE today released fresh analysis that reveals that the top 21 airports in the EU & EFTA* invested more than **€53 billion** back into their facilities over the past 10 years – and at much less cost than some airlines have accused them.

The investment delivered an additional capacity of close to **178 million passengers** – equivalent to adding an extra London-Heathrow, Paris-Charles de Gaulle and Paris-Orly to the European aviation network. This additional capacity almost perfectly matched traffic growth at these 21 airports as they welcomed 168 million additional passengers in 2015, compared to 2005. This additional capacity also allowed these airports to increase their total connectivity by **+51.6%** and their direct connectivity by +**10.7%**.

In addition to creating new and much needed capacity at often-congested airports serving significant economic centres, this investment also delivered increased quality. According the independent ASQ surveys[2] carried over the same period, passenger satisfaction increased by +12.4% at these same airports during that time.

INVESTMENT ALIGNED WITH THE AVIATION STRATEGY

Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI EUROPE commented: "*Europe's major airports show that airport investment is not about building Taj Mahals. It is about boosting capacity, quality and ultimately air connectivity for Europe – which means a direct and very substantial contribution to economic growth and job creation. These €53 billion were invested in strategic infrastructure without weighing on public finances. As such they complement the European Strategic Investment Fund and are essentially driving the objectives of the EU Aviation Strategy*."

With this analysis, ACI EUROPE is also correcting and responding to the extraordinary claim made by A4E (Airline For Europe) that airport charges at the top 21 EU & EFTA airports increased by +80% since 2005. Based on detailed data from its members, ACI EUROPE is setting the record straight: the reality is that charges at these airports only increased by **+25.4%** in real terms - less than **€3** per passenger over 10 years - in return for much improved airport services and facilities.

< €3 PER PASSENGER OVER 10 YEARS – LET'S PUT THAT IN CONTEXT

This increase in airport charges is equivalent or below price changes in essential products and services like education (+30.8%), electricity (+30.8%) or water supply (+25.3%). What's more, market forces ensured that throughout these 10 years, airlines and passengers using the top 21 EU & EFTA airports continued to benefit from below cost charges – with revenues from airport charges never covering more than 60-70% of total airport costs.

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In addition, A4E had also claimed a decrease in air fares of -20% over the past decade. It is unclear how these figures were derived, but Eurostat data shows that European households faced a +29% increase in the cost of airline tickets during this period.

FOCUS ON CONSUMERS, NOT AIRLINES

The ACI EUROPE Analysis demonstrates that the main driver of airport charges is investment for the delivery of more airport capacity, quality and connectivity. This exposes the danger of the fallacy that airport regulation should be concerned with the systematic reduction of airport charges to "protect the airlines". There will invariably be wider negative repercussions for the economy and the travelling public if airports are not allowed to invest. A new market-driven approach to airport regulation is needed – one that focuses on consumers rather than airlines, in line with the EU Aviation Strategy.

Olivier Jankovec commented: "*A4E and its airline members behave like Alice in Wonderland, where money apparently grows on trees. Whether we like it or not, European governments are no longer willing to pay for airport infrastructure – and EU rules now forbid State aid to large airports on competition grounds. This is not what may be happening in other parts of the World, but this is our reality here in Europe – and this means that airlines need to come to terms with paying a fair share of the costs involved*."

Notes to Editors:

All figures cited in this release are from ACI EUROPE's new Analysis Paper entitled ***Leveraging Airport Investment to deliver the EU's Aviation Strategy***, free to download here: https://www.aci-europe.org/component/downloads/downloads/4680.html

* the 21 airports are: Amsterdam Schiphol, Barcelona, Berlin Tegel, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, London Gatwick, London Heathrow, Madrid, Manchester, Munich, Oslo, Palma de Mallorca, Paris CDG & Orly, Rome FCO, Stockholm Arlanda, Vienna and Zurich.

[1] According to independent research carried out by InterVISTAS, a +10% increase in direct air connectivity results in a +0.5% increase in GDP.

[2] ASQ is the Airport Service Quality programme. Over 250,000 surveys monitoring 34 parameters took place at the 21 airports involved.

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ACI EUROPE is the European region of Airports Council International (ACI), the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents close to ***500 airports*** *in 45 European countries. In 2014, our member airports handled over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe, welcoming more than* ***1.8 billion passengers****,* ***18.4 million tonnes of freight*** *and* ***21.2 million aircraft movements****. These airports contribute to the employment of* ***12.3 million people****, generating* ***€675 billion each year*** *(****4.1%) of GDP*** *in Europe.*

EVERY FLIGHT BEGINS AT THE AIRPORT.