

Ms  
Adina Vălean  
Commissioner for Transport  
European Commission

Transport ministers  
of the EU Member States

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Dear Commissioner Vălean, *dear Adina*,

Dear Minister,

I would like to once again warmly thank you for your participation in the Aviation Summit on 23 July 2020 and for your active interventions, which made a major contribution to the successful virtual exchange between high-ranking EU transport policymakers, industry, airports and air carriers.

I would like to record the outcomes of the discussion that I regard as most important and, thus, contribute to the targeted continuation of our joint efforts to **overcome the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic**.

It would appear likely that the pandemic and its impact on air transport will continue for a long time yet. At the Aviation Summit, it was emphasized that we need an **internationally harmonised** approach to overcome the crisis and to regain the confidence of passengers. This is even more important when we consider the rising number of infections throughout the world.

It was demanded that measures with a short-term effect to counter the crisis as well as long-term strategies to support the aviation sector in overcoming the crisis be developed.

In addition, it was repeatedly pointed out that it is necessary to **relax and harmonise entry restrictions**. However, it was also made clear that it is essential to control and contain the pandemic. The aviation industry directly depends on health policy strategies of all states as well as on the confidence of passengers. Therefore, it was regarded as important that we in Europe enter into a harmonised dialogue with third countries on this topic.

Since the recovery of the aviation sector will take longer, it was proposed by some participants that the **EU Slot Regulation**, which was amended in March, be speedily extended. An early extension of the regulation would provide air carriers and airports with the necessary planning certainty with regard to the winter schedule and maintain the network structures important for European and global connectivity. In addition, this would prevent flights having to be operated for the sole purpose of maintaining slots.

In this context, I appreciate the announcement by the European Commission that it will present a legislative proposal on amending the Slot Regulation as well as a delegated act to extend the slot waiver soon.

It was also demanded that innovative, climate-friendly approaches be pursued when air transport is resumed. In addition to technological innovations, this would also include implementing the CORSIA climate policy instrument for international aviation and several initiatives to promote the market ramp-up of sustainable aviation fuel, especially electricity-based fuels. The announcement by the European Commission that it will develop a legislative proposal for the production and market ramp-up of „**sustainable aviation fuels**“ (SAF) during the German Council Presidency was widely supported.

Concerning air navigation services, it was stated that the crisis had shown clearly that the legal basis of the Single European Sky was not sufficiently flexible. The Performance and Charging Schemes cannot cope with a situation of fundamentally changed conditions concerning the expected traffic volume and cost plans and allocations made on this basis. It was also mentioned that a **reform of the Single European Sky** was regarded as a building block for achieving our climate change goals within the framework of the Green Deal. It is expected that the European Commission will soon present a proposal that the German Presidency will swiftly address.

Participants also stated that the pandemic had shown a need for clarification concerning the European rules governing the rights of air passengers. In addition to the clearly identified requirement of regaining the confidence of passengers, it was also demanded, among other things, that we learn from our experience and address more-far-reaching issues. In this context, it was made clear by several participants that it was necessary to progress the **revision of the Passenger Rights Regulation (EC) No 261/2004**. The rights of air passengers, compliance with them and their enforcement were an instrument for strengthening passengers' confidence in air transport but also for guaranteeing legal certainty for air carriers. Therefore, we intend to continue working on this topic under the German EU Council Presidency.

Dear Commissioner, dear colleagues, the debate has shown that we need to rethink air transport and pursue innovative strategies at European level and global level. There is an enormous **potential for innovation**, for instance in the field of sustainable aviation fuels. In this way, we will be able to safeguard the competitiveness of the European aviation sector, contribute towards meeting our climate change goals and win back air transport passengers with modern, sustainable and reliable air services.

We will combine this new beginning with debates on the future issues of mobility to form the “**New Mobility Approach**” and, thus, establish priorities for the Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility announced by the European Commission.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Andreas Scheuer