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European Airports and Airlines call for a "responsible environmental policy for aviation" and urge EU States to implement the Single European Sky

Paris, 18 June 2008: Chief Executives from European airports and airlines met today in advance of the 18th ACI EUROPE Annual Assembly, Congress and Exhibition.

Increasingly high fuel costs, and looming recession have caused airlines to warn of possible route and frequency reductions in the coming months, which will have a domino effect on airports, especially regional ones.

With such uncertainty about the short-term and potentially medium-term viability of the aviation industry, the Management Boards of the **Association of European Airlines** and **Airports Council International Europe** met to review the growing array of industry challenges.

On the issue of the environment, the two Boards restated the need for aviation to address its impact on climate change in an environmentally effective and economically viable way. However, in reviewing the recent amendments added by the Environment Committee of the European Parliament to the proposed inclusion of aviation in the EU's Emission Trading Scheme (ETS), both boards expressed deep concern at this latest development.

Peter Hartman, Chairman of the Association of European Airlines, and CEO of KLM said: "We face a number of challenges. In the short term, the energy costs could become an impediment to growth. Fuel is the single biggest cost factor for an industry that cannot use other sources of energy. With the current high fuel prices, airlines across the globe are doing what they can to reduce fuel consumption".

"Regarding the need for a global emissions trading scheme, although it is good that Europe has taken the lead in developing a model, the political discussion on this ETS model has turned what is supposed to be a tool to manage emissions into a punitive weapon to batter the European aviation sector. Such an ETS has no value as a blueprint for eventual global agreement, and by merely making European airlines uncompetitive, and drives passengers into aircraft from non-EU countries, has no benefit for the environment and has mutated into an ordinary tax."

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Dr Yiannis Paraschis, President ACI EUROPE and CEO Athens International Airport said: "European airports have been long-time advocates of the inclusion of aviation in the EU ETS, but the latest developments would impose unjustified and punitive conditions on the aviation industry. It is alarming to say the least that these amendments have been voted upon in the Environmental Committee of the European Parliament without any impact assessment. If confirmed, they would put the international credibility of the EU's stance on climate change at risk."

The two Boards further considered the environmental gains that should be realised by finally reforming the present Air Traffic Management (ATM) patchwork resulting from the fragmentation of national systems. They also reviewed the negative environmental and competitive impact of the looming airport capacity crunch, as it will only add to the deficiencies of the European Air Traffic Management system. European airlines and airports are looking forward to the imminent adoption by the European Commission of a second regulatory package for the Single European Sky project. They urge the Commission to ensure that it will provide the collaborative stimulus to force Member States to deliver existing commitments on defragmentation and that it will be accompanied by the necessary call-to-action regarding airport capacity.

Hartman said, "We need an efficient air traffic management system. Inefficiency on the scale of the present system can be measured in billions of Euros each year. Because it is inefficient, it is anti-European. Because it gives rise to delays, it is anti-consumer. Because airlines are forced to fly holding patterns and indirect routings, it is anti-environment. The Single European Sky reduces the environmental impact of aviation, because if implemented, airlines could reduce CO₂ emissions by 12 million tonnes."

Paraschis added "It is about time that the EU aligned ATM and airport capacity objectives. For years, the Single European Sky project has been developed in splendid isolation with a focus on doubling capacity in the sky, without meaningful consideration for what happens on the ground. If airport capacity is not addressed at EU level, the Single European Sky will fail and with it, European aviation. We need environmentally-robust capacity on the ground, to compliment what is being created in the air."

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