

Information

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AEA CALLS FOR FURTHER ACTION ON MEASURES TO EASE IMPACT OF AIRSPACE CLOSURES

The Association of European Airlines, representing Europe's most important network carriers, has welcomed the statement of EU Commissioner Kallas at the Transport Council today, to investigate the financial consequences of the nine-day disruption caused by the Icelandic volcano by the end of June, which should also provide clarity about the uniform treatment of airlines and their customers.

The Transport Ministers met in a special session to discuss the report of the European Commission's High Level Task Force on the impact of the closure of most of European airspace. They noted the Task Force findings and propose a medium-term review of procedures. However, the outcome provided little encouragement for airlines, whose business was closed down for a week, and passengers, who were stranded throughout Europe and across the world.

Said AEA Secretary General Ulrich Schulte-Strathaus: *"The Task Force report, presented by Commission Vice-President Kallas, contains a wealth of worthwhile proposals. The Commission correctly identified shortcomings in the European decision-making process. As a consequence of the disproportionate closure of air space, passengers must have assurances that their costs will be covered. Airlines should be granted non-discriminatory and fair compensation for the damage they incurred. And those concerned must improve the procedures."*

AEA welcomed the consensus amongst the EU Ministers to expedite the implementation of the Single European Sky programme to rationalise European airspace, and in doing so put in place a more effective crisis-management framework. And in the broader context, their commitment to develop an aviation policy 'platform' addresses the uncoordinated nature of European aviation regulation.

- Adria Airways
- Aegean Airlines
- Aer Lingus
- AeroSvit
- airBaltic
- Air France
- Air Malta
- Alitalia
- Austrian
- bmi
- British Airways
- brussels airlines
- Cargolux
- Croatia Airlines
- Cyprus Airways
- Czech Airlines
- DHL
- Finnair
- Iberia
- Icelandair
- Jat Airways
- KLM
- LOT
- Lufthansa
- Luxair
- Malev
- Montenegro Airlines
- Olympic Air
- SAS Scandinavian Airlines
- SWISS
- TAP Portugal
- TAROM
- TNT Airways
- Turkish Airlines
- Ukraine International Airlines
- Virgin Atlantic Airways

Nevertheless, the Transport Ministers failed to address the economic impact of the airspace closures and no directions were given on improvements to the current procedures. *"An opportunity has been missed to provide Europe with the guidance and leadership we all require in determining how to compensate for the damage incurred. Lessons must be learned from the grounding of European aviation, and in future we must maintain our high levels of safety without giving rise to a breakdown of our infrastructure. Only then will Europe's economy remain internationally competitive"*.

For further information, please contact:

David Henderson

Manager Information

Phone : +32(0) 2 639 89 72

Email: david.henderson@aea.be

www.aea.be

Note to the Editor: The Association of European Airlines (AEA) brings together 36 European established scheduled network carriers. These collectively carry 347 million passengers and 6 million tonnes of cargo each year, operating 2,160 aircraft serving 662 destinations in 162 countries with 11,400 flights a day. They provide around 385,000 jobs directly, and generate a total turnover of €70 billion