

Press Release



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Aviation sector welcomes updated EASA–ECDC Aviation Health Safety Protocol calling for harmonised and risk-based COVID-19 travel measures – member states must now implement

- Report acknowledges positive epidemiological developments across Europe and low risk of virus spread during air travel.
- Risk-based approach will make travel easier for passengers by avoiding duplication of checks throughout the journey, including for transfer passengers.
- For first time ever, protocol supports the use of Rapid Antigen Tests and recognises potential capacity constraints at airport terminals due to continued physical distancing requirements.

Leading aviation associations¹ welcomed the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)'s latest [COVID-19 Aviation Health Safety Protocol](#), which acknowledges the positive epidemiological developments across Europe and low risk of virus transmission during air travel as part of updated measures to keep travel safe and smooth for passengers this summer. For the first time ever, the Protocol supports the use of Rapid Antigen Tests, particularly for passengers travelling from high-risk areas – and also calls for harmonisation of the measures across Europe. This follows this week's adoption of the latest Council Recommendations supporting the restart of intra-EU and third country travel, making use of the EU's Digital COVID Certificate (DCC) system. Member states must now implement the DCC system by 1 July. Already 15² EU countries have connected their national certificate systems to the EU gateway ahead of the deadline.

The updated Protocol echoes the Council Recommendation, proposing that, “people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or who recovered from the disease in the last 180 days should not be subject to testing or quarantine, unless they are coming from an area of very high risk or where a variant of concern is circulating. For travel from such destinations, the requirement for a negative test could be considered. This could be either a Rapid Antigen Detection Test (RADT) taken no more than 48 hours before arrival or a PCR test no more than 72 hours before arrival.”

¹ Airlines for Europe (A4E); Airports Council International Europe (ACI EUROPE); Aerospace and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD); Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO); European Regions Airline Association (ERA) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA)

² Countries as of 17 June include: Belgium, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland and Iceland

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In a joint statement, the six associations said: “Protection of public health, including that of our staff and our passengers, continues to be aviation’s number one priority throughout this pandemic. Following successful vaccination programmes across Europe and an improved epidemiological outlook, these updated guidelines are very timely and will help to ensure a smooth and safe passenger journey. We are counting on EU member states to now play their part and update the existing measures accordingly, so that passengers know what to expect. This is crucially important for restoring passenger confidence and to help our sector’s recovery.”

The associations further welcome the following updates to the Protocol:

- **Flexibility regarding the requirement for continued physical distancing at airports**, given that only fully vaccinated, recovered or tested passengers will be travelling. This will help ease operational challenges posed by the previous physical distancing measures. Both airports and aircraft continue to be extremely safe environments.
- From a health safety perspective, **verification of the DCC is best organised prior to departure**.
- **Testing, where required, should be carried out before a flight** rather than upon arrival or during transit.
- **Document checks should be limited to one single check prior to travel**. Repeated checks, e.g. also upon arrival, serves very little medical purpose and could lead to unnecessary queuing.

Europe now has all the tools: the DCC, a digital Passenger Locator Form (dPLF) and Council Recommendations on international and intra-EU travel to ensure a safe and smooth reopening of air travel this summer. As vaccination rates increase and the epidemiological situation further improves, the six associations expect the last preventative measures to be further scaled back or removed as appropriate, in line with a reduction in the overall risk level.

ENDS

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Airlines for Europe (A4E) is Europe’s largest airline association, based in Brussels. The organisation advocates on behalf of its 16 airline group members to help shape EU aviation policy to the benefit of consumers, ensuring a continued safe and competitive air transport market. Follow us on Twitter @A4Europe.

ACI EUROPE is the European region of Airports Council International (ACI), the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents over 500 airports in 55 countries. Our members facilitate over 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe. Air transport supports 13.5 million jobs, generating €886 billion in European economic activity (4.4% of GDP). In response to the Climate Emergency, in June 2019 our members committed to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions for operations under their control by 2050, without offsetting.



ASD is the voice of European Aeronautics, Space, Defence and Security Industries, actively promoting and supporting the competitive development of the sector by advocating common positions towards European Institutions and International organisations.

The Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO) is the global voice of air traffic management worldwide. CANSO Members support almost 90 percent of world air traffic. Members share information and develop new policies, with the ultimate aim of improving air navigation services on the ground and in the air. CANSO represents its Members' views in major regulatory and industry forums, including at ICAO, where it has official Observer status. CANSO has an extensive network of Associate Members drawn from across the aviation industry. For more, visit canso.org.

European Regions Airline Association (ERA) – Founded in 1980, European Regions Airline Association (ERA) is a non-profit trade association representing over 60 airlines and around 150 companies involved in European air transport and is the only association representing the entire spectrum of companies involved in European aviation. The association promotes the interests of European airlines by lobbying European regulatory bodies on policy matters, promoting the social and economic importance of air transport and its environmental commitments.

IATA (International Air Transport Association) represents some 290 airlines comprising 82% of global air traffic. You can follow IATA at <https://twitter.com/iata> for announcements, policy positions, and other useful industry information.

