

Press Release

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ERA heralds decision to further extend airline slots waiver as essential for the future recovery of aviation

- ERA (European Regions Airline Association) is pleased by the decision made by the European Commission to extend the slots waiver until 27 March 2021.
- As the aviation industry continues its fight for survival, the extension of the slot waiver to include the European winter season 2020/21 is essential to aiding airlines' recovery.

Adding to the pressures already felt by the aviation industry in the current pandemic climate, the recent lack of certainty over slots has made it exceptionally difficult for airlines to plan their schedules for the upcoming winter months, as recognised in a statement by European Commissioner for Transport, Adina Iona Vălean. ERA is therefore very pleased to welcome the Commission's decision to further extend the slot waiver to include the upcoming winter season.

It is hoped that this agreement will allow for greater planning for not only airlines, but airports and co-ordinators, allowing them to maximise the use of capacity at a critical time and promote the recovery of air connectivity whilst still preventing anti-competitive behaviours. Additionally, this will allow for specific cargo needs to be addressed, ensuring that cargo operators can leverage additional short-term capacity.

Montserrat Barriga, ERA Director General, says: "We are very happy to see the European Commission has listened to our industry's concerns and will be ensuring the 'use-it-or-lose-it' rule is not applied during the 2020/2021 European winter season. Air traffic is resuming slowly, but latest forecasts show it is not expected to have returned to pre-crisis levels until at least 2024 and there is still a lot of uncertainty in regards to how the pandemic will develop. These facts cannot be overlooked and brought the urgent need for the slot waiver to be extended. This agreement will therefore play a key role in supporting European aviation in its recovery."

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* Founded in 1980, ERA is a non-profit trade association representing 64 airlines and 148 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.

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