

## **Social Distancing in Business Aviation: Open letter to European policy-makers and regulators**

Brussels, 30 April 2020

Dear policy-makers and regulators,

The European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) calls for a coordinated approach on the lifting of air travel restrictions. The EU Institutions, the European Member States, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and other vital aviation stakeholders such as the Business Aviation community, need to collaborate closely to develop harmonised rules for the safe reopening of air travel. The proposed rules should ensure a safe, timely and workable return to normal operations.

The European Commission is currently developing a set of rules for the safe reopening of air travel post-COVID-19 crisis. These guidelines and protective measures should be published mid-May 2020 according to the European Commissioner for Transport, Ms Adina-ioana Vălean. Ahead of their publication, the European Business Aviation community would like to share a series of important points to be considered in the development of inclusive measures that are adapted and relevant to the specificities of our sector.

### **Business Aviation is on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic**

Business Aviation plays a vital role in the fight against COVID-19. Many operators specialised in medical and emergency flights are currently providing essential services to communities fighting the pandemic, including for the transport of health workers. But all other medical emergencies have not stopped, and are being handled by Business Aviation operators despite numerous operational challenges and travel restrictions. Along with medical and emergency flights, our sector also provides cargo flights, ensuring the worldwide transport and delivery of critical medical supplies. Repatriation flights are also organised, supporting European and national governments' efforts in reuniting citizens across Europe.

### **Business Aviation will be on the frontline of the post-crisis recovery**

Our sector has always been a lifeline for communities, be it for medical transport or as a tool to help governments and businesses generate local economic development. Business Aviation is a leading contributor to the European job market, securing nearly half a million highly-skilled, highly paid jobs and accounting for 90 billion euros of economic output.

Business Aviation operations are adaptable, tailored and highly secure by nature. Business Aviation operators can offer specific precautionary measures and guarantees that ensure the highest level of safety. Additional safety measures have already been developed and implemented in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. As such, Business Aviation can and will be one of the first-movers once it is safe to lift travel restrictions. When families want to reunite, when companies need to transport workers once again, when governments want to continue their repatriation efforts, Business Aviation operators will be able to help, quickly and safely.

Just like the broader aviation industry, the crisis has severely impacted the Business Aviation sector. On 2 April, EBAA sent an open letter urging European policy-makers and regulators to protect the continuity and survival of the Business Aviation sector in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures in our letter aim at the same objective; helping to safeguard as many companies as possible in our sector. It is therefore urgent to define inclusive and harmonised rules to help them resume their operations as soon as possible.

**Social distancing and other safety measures are already being put in place by Business Aviation**

The European Business Aviation community fully supports all the measures taken so far by authorities in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Safety is – and always will be – our priority, whether for passengers, crews and other workers involved in our sector’s operations.

**In the table below, we provide an overview of the key measures taken by Business Aviation operators to avoid the transmission of COVID-19. These measures are applied to passengers, staff and crew during the different phases of the flight: (1) pre-flight (2) waiting & boarding (3) in-flight and (4) deboarding.**

The measures below focus on passenger operations and does not include *all* the measures applied to medical flights that are performed by crews and staff specially trained to undertake sensitive medical missions.

	<b>Passengers</b>	<b>Crews and Staff</b>
<b>All or several phases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Aviation airport terminals (FBOs) adapted their procedures to coordinate the safe arrival/departure of passengers and arrange an immediate boarding, sometimes directly from the car to the aircraft, therefore, limiting the number of waiting passengers in dedicated waiting rooms.</li> <li>• Distancing of passengers at security, private waiting rooms and common areas (also when utilising cars and equipment for boarding and deboarding).</li> <li>• Disinfection/sanitisation of spaces, offices, vehicles, equipment and hard surfaces.</li> <li>• PPE* strongly recommended at all times (*personal protection equipment: mouth mask).</li> <li>• Non-family members or people not residing together to apply social distancing at all times during the different phases of the flight.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distancing of staff and crews at security, and common areas (also when utilising vehicles and equipment).</li> <li>• Compulsory PPE (personal protection equipment).</li> <li>• Daily temperature check for all staff working for and in the FBO (including handlers, maintenance companies, workers). Possible implementation of staff testing to ascertain noncontagious status.</li> <li>• PPE* strongly recommended at all times when off-duty (*personal protection equipment: at least mouth mask, gloves strongly encouraged).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operators through their Safety Management Systems (SMS) can perform daily risk assessments for each mission and apply appropriate mitigation measures.</li> <li>• Disinfection/sanitisation of spaces, offices, vehicles, equipment and hard surfaces.</li> <li>• Specific procedures for the use of common areas.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Passengers</b>	<b>Crews and Staff</b>
<b>Pre-flight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passenger Questionnaire on COVID-19 (symptoms &amp; contacts with infected or symptomatic people).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crew composition scheduled in teams that work together all the time.</li> <li>• Crew Questionnaire on COVID-19 (symptoms &amp; contacts with infected or symptomatic people).</li> <li>• Body temperature check (non-invasive thermal screening) conducted before boarding, to identify any crew member with a consistent body temperature above 37.5°C.</li> </ul>
<b>Waiting rooms &amp; boarding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body temperature check (non-invasive thermal screening) conducted before boarding, to identify any passenger with a consistent body temperature above 37.5°C.</li> <li>• Sanitising gel dispensers in waiting rooms.</li> <li>• Only allowing passengers on the same flight into the waiting rooms, if waiting rooms access required.</li> <li>• Encouraging walking to the aircraft wherever possible. If transport to the aircraft is necessary, the maximum number of people per vehicle will be as per the waiting rooms procedure and taking into consideration the size of the vehicle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanitising gel dispensers in the terminals and staff areas.</li> <li>• Social distancing applied between passengers and staff, and between staff themselves.</li> </ul>
<b>In-flight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPE (mouth mask) mandatory at all times when the pilot(s) or cabin crew members are in the passenger cabin.</li> <li>• Sanitising gel dispensers on board the aircraft.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPE (mouth mask and gloves) mandatory at all times when the pilot(s) or cabin crew members are in the passenger cabin.</li> <li>• Sanitising gel dispensers on board the aircraft.</li> </ul>

	Passengers	Crews and Staff
<b>De-boarding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• De-boarding in a group.</li> <li>• PPE strongly recommended at all times (check with destination national rules &amp; regulations).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• De-boarding in a group.</li> <li>• PPE strongly recommended at all times (check with destination national rules &amp; regulations).</li> </ul>
<b>Post-flight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller business aircraft cabins, due to their size, allow for a more focused and thoroughly clean and disinfection than would typically take place in a large cabin aircraft.</li> <li>• Sanitising all touchpoints after every flight.</li> <li>• Tracing of passengers showing symptoms or testing positive to COVID-19 after the flight is straightforward as their contact details are known. Operators and Brokers are developing a preventive process for passengers that show symptoms after a flight to report it immediately to them so that contacts can be isolated.</li> </ul>	

We call on the European institutions, the Member States, Switzerland and the United Kingdom to :

- **Consider the unique nature of Business Aviation operations, the personalised approach and services offering the highest levels of safety, even before the crisis.** In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Business Aviation can quickly incorporate more public health measures.
- **Work with Business Aviation experts and consider the technical guidelines that are currently in place to define any future rules for the safe reopening of air travel.** Detailed Business Aviation technical guidelines are under development by a specialised EBAA Safety and Technical committee composed of engineers, medical doctors and Business Aviation safety specialists. These guidelines will be shared with policy-makers and regulators ahead of the publications of the rules by the European Commission.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that our sector can return to normal operations as rapidly as possible and help you shape the European economic and social recovery.

Yours sincerely,



**Athar Husain Khan**  
Secretary-General  
European Business Aviation Association