

PRESS RELEASE

European aviation associations and EASA join to promote harmonised safe air travel during COVID-19

23 July 2020, Geneva/Cologne/Brussels. European Aviation Associations and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) agreed to strengthen efforts to ensure a consistent and safe travel experience for passengers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated travel restrictions have had a devastating impact on air traffic and put at risk millions of jobs that rely on air connectivity. As Europe seeks to reopen, it is essential that operations are marked by consistent implementation of passenger safety procedures across the continent.

EASA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) have developed protocols for the measures airports, airlines and operators should adopt to ensure a safe return to normal operations.

The guidelines address the entire journey from the passenger's perspective, at the departure airport, onboard of the aircraft and at arrival. They contain specific, complementary measures devised to ensure the protection of passengers and crews against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Passengers are required to take personal responsibility, for example by not even coming to the airport if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

Airlines and airports have been asked to follow enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures as well as following guidance to ensure the best possible ventilation while onboard the aircraft. The quality of air onboard is one of the most important mitigating factors against the spread of coronavirus, and most aircraft have high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters installed which sterilise the air to operating theatre quality. Further measures, such as changes to in-flight service, have been recommended to reduce the risk of transmission through contaminated surfaces. Similar recommendations have been issued by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in its *Take-off* guidance.

To strengthen the implementation of these measures, Airlines for Europe (A4E), the European Business Aviation Association (EBAA), the European Regions Airline Association (ERA) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) have signed a cooperation agreement with EASA to promote the harmonised and coordinated implementation of the EASA/ECDC protocols by industry, governments and travellers.

A complimentary [Charter](#) programme has been set up by EASA to monitor the implementation of the guidelines and provide feedback. Over 60 organisations serving millions of passengers have signed up to the charter on a voluntary basis.

"The aviation industry has worked closely with health authorities and regulators worldwide to develop protocols to safely restart operations. The ICAO Take-off guidelines set an international framework for safeguarding public health, and in Europe, the EASA/ECDC Protocols are similarly aligned. This mutual cooperation agreement with EASA will promote a coordinated implementation of the operational guidelines in order to facilitate the recovery of air travel," said **Rafael Schwartzman, IATA's Regional Vice President for Europe.**

"This crisis has revealed the importance of cooperation, communication and a harmonised approach. The latter continues to prove challenging both for airlines and our passengers, as Member States implement differing health and travel measures," said **Thomas Reynaert, Managing Director, Airlines for Europe (A4E).** *"This agreement promotes further cohesion amongst our aviation community in Europe and will ensure that the most effective protocols are in place, particularly as passenger numbers rise and improved COVID testing capabilities enter the pipeline."*

EBAA Secretary-General, Athar Husain Khan commented. *“We’re delighted to be joining forces with the rest of the aviation community to formalise our cooperation and communication at this critical time. The return to normal for travel hinges on harmonised safety and operational guidelines for passengers and business aviation operators alike. Today’s agreement is an important step in accelerating the recovery of the European air transport sector.”*

“Building on the EASA/ECDC guidelines and the wider Return to Normal Operations (RNO) project initiated by EASA, this cooperation agreement is another step forward in ensuring that harmonised and robust protocols and processes are delivered across Europe,” said **Montserrat Barriga, Director General of ERA**. *“This will further help to give certainty to ERA’s airline members, ensuring the highest level of safety and give enhanced confidence to consumers.”*

“The endorsement of our guidelines by IATA, A4E, EBAA and ERA establishes these procedures as the standard for the European aviation industry,” said EASA Executive Director Patrick Ky. *“Consistent implementation of the guidelines is critical to rebuilding passenger confidence, which is in turn fundamental for a decision to travel by air, whether for leisure or for business.”*

“It is important that national authorities play their part in ensuring the guidelines are followed and avoid unilaterally introducing measures which create inconsistencies,” he added. *“All industry players, every employee and the travelling public themselves need to follow the same guidelines at every step of the journey from airport to destination, so as to create a safe environment for all.”*

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Note to Editors:

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.

The European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) is the leading organisation for operators of business aircraft in Europe. Founded in 1977 and based in Brussels, EBAA represents +700 members companies, corporate and commercial operators, manufacturers, airports, fixed-based operators, and more. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#), or visit our website on www.ebaa.org.

Founded in 1980, **ERA** is a non-profit trade association representing 65 airlines and 149 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.

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) is the centrepiece of the European Union’s strategy for aviation safety. Our mission is to promote and achieve the highest common standards of safety and environmental protection in civil aviation. Based in Cologne, the Agency employs experts and administrators from all over Europe.

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