

Urgent call to action

March 2021

EBAA urges national governments and the EU to coordinate and develop concrete plans to restore the free movement of people and fully restart Business aviation activity

EBAA's view for the EU institutions and national governments

The epidemiological situation in some countries around Europe and the appearance of new variants remain a key concern for all. Since the beginning of the COVID19 crisis, the priority of Business aviation is and will remain the safety of passengers, crews, and citizens in general. Even if there is still a long way before the conclusion of this unprecedented global pandemic, promising evidence of rapidly improving epidemiological situations in some countries applying efficient COVID19 vaccination strategies are pointing us toward the light at the end of the tunnel.

As the vaccination of European citizens and especially vulnerable populations will intensify in the next few weeks and months around Europe, coupled with the end of the winter season, the pressure on our healthcare systems will decrease, enabling policymakers to restore the activity and livelihood of millions of Europeans including those relying on the Business aviation sector.

The European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) calls for a coordinated approach to develop concrete plans to restore the free movement of people and fully restart Business aviation activity. 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 guidelines and rules should ensure a safe, timely and workable return to normal operations.

Business aviation is on the frontline of the COVID19 pandemic

Business aviation plays a vital role in the fight against COVID19. Many operators specialised in medical and emergency flights are currently providing essential services to communities still fighting the pandemic. 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 including vaccines.

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. Our operators can offer specific precautionary measures and guarantees that ensure the highest level of safety. Additional safety measures have been developed and implemented in the context of the COVID19 crisis. As such, Business aviation can and will be one of the first movers once it is safe to lift all travel restrictions. When families want to reunite, when companies need to transport workers once again, Business aviation operators will be able to help, quickly and safely.

What we need to restart our sector

1. Real coordination of travel restrictions

Since the start of the pandemic, the lack of coordination of travel restrictions and often different requirements around Europe had a serious operational and financial impact on Business aviation. EBAA urges Member States to follow the guidelines of the EASA-ECDC health protocol. After a year of crisis, travel bans cannot be the solution, various procedures and processes including testing are now implemented and guarantee the health and safety of Business aviation passengers, crews, and staff.

Requirements, restrictions, and rules need to be streamlined; individuals and companies should find and understand information quickly.

The restart of international travel (outside the EU) should be a priority for policymakers. There will not be a recovery without Business aviation activity back to normal. Investments' decisions are made by companies and ultimately individuals, Business aviation provides them with a solution to conduct their businesses, to sign new contracts, to expand their activities, etc. Key business decisions cannot be made based on virtual contacts; the same as an individual would not buy a house without visiting it in person.

To avoid unnecessary complications and ensure easy understanding, EBAA recommends a single, or at minimum very similar, travel requirements or guidelines for all EU member states.

2. Testing and rapid testing

Business aviation implemented testing for passengers and crews since the start of the pandemic. Our sector's personalised approach enables operators and/or Business aviation terminals (FBOs) to implement rapid testing for passengers and crews providing additional guarantees.

We call on policymakers and regulators to develop a harmonised framework for testing air passengers considering Business aviation specificities. Our sector can verify and prove that passengers and crews are COVID19 negative before any flight, but a common framework would facilitate and streamline processes.

Testing cannot be considered as a permanent solution and exit strategies must be developed so they can be implemented when the epidemiological situation around Europe and the globe will normalise.

3. Vaccination as a facilitator not a condition to travel

Vaccination should be an additional guarantee, not a condition to travel. Nevertheless, a vaccinated passenger or crew member who tested negative before a flight should be exempted from entry bans and quarantines.

We call on policymakers and regulators to develop a common framework globally recognised that would enable passengers and crews to demonstrate to authorities that they are vaccinated. This system should be interoperable and adapted to Business aviation companies such as operators, Business aviation terminals (FBOs) or charter brokers.

4. The elimination of restrictions for crews

After a year of crisis, our operators' crews are still facing too many restrictions. Crews are constantly tested, and Business aviation operators are taking additional measures to guarantee that crews on duty are not contaminated. Quarantine measures should not impose on the crew who need to layover, or rest, to comply with flight time limitations (FTL) rest requirements or training requirements

5. Business aviation workers are front-line workers

Business aviation provides medical and emergency flights in addition to business and cargo flights carrying COVID19 vaccines around Europe and the globe. As soon as the most vulnerable populations are vaccinated, Business aviation workers are to be considered in priority for vaccination.

We urge competent authorities to cooperate for the benefit of all

Let's work together

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

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About EBAA

The European Business aviation Association (EBAA) is the leading organisation for operators of business aircraft in Europe. Our mission is to enable responsible, sustainable growth for Business aviation, enhance connectivity and create opportunities. EBAA works to improve safety standards and share knowledge, to further positive regulation and to ease all aspects of closely tailored, flexible, point to point air transportation for individuals, governments, businesses, and local communities in the most time-efficient way possible. Founded in 1977 and based in Brussels, EBAA represents +700 members companies, corporate operators, commercial operators, manufacturers, airports, fixed-based operators, and more, with a total fleet of +1,000 aircraft.

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