



MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Rue de la Loi, 200
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Brussels, 29.09.2020
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IATA

E-mail:

Dear ,

I thank you for your letter of 18 August 2020 regarding the extension of the slot waiver to the winter 2020/2021 scheduling season.

I am aware that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a detrimental impact on the level of air traffic and that under these circumstances, airlines and airports have considerable difficulties in planning their schedules.

As you know, the amendment to the Slot Regulation adopted in March 2020 allows the Commission to extend the waiver by delegated act if this is supported by data on decreasing air traffic levels linked with the COVID-19 pandemic. The data that has been collected so far on the issue has been presented in a report to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2020)558)¹. The available data suggests that an extension of the slot waiver by delegated act is necessary. Current trends suggest that air traffic will not have fully recovered to pre-crisis levels by the end of the winter 2020/2021 season. As a result, experts from Member States will be consulted on a waiver extension for the full winter 2020/2021 season under a delegated act, which will be left for the College to decide.

It is important that, while airlines receive the necessary relief under the circumstances, the approach taken is balanced and takes into account the needs of all stakeholders involved. In this context, we became aware of certain issues with the implementation of the current waiver, namely the late handing back of unused slots to the pool by some airlines and certain airlines

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/news/2020-09-14-common-rules-allocation-slots-community-airports_en

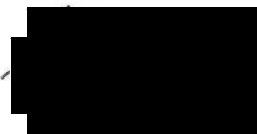
requesting new slots while not being able to operate their whole slot portfolio. As a result, my services encouraged airlines, airports and slot-coordinators to agree on best practices to deal with some of these issues. On 7 August you informed us about a successful agreement between IATA, A4E, AIRE, ACI and EUACA.

I am aware of the efforts involved in reaching a successful conclusion in such a short time and I wish to extend my congratulations on this achievement. I strongly welcome this agreement between the different stakeholder groups and believe it will help ensure that airport capacity is allocated optimally during these difficult times. Yet, further conditions may be necessary to address concerns about the efficient use of airport capacity, such as, for instance, excluding traded and leased slots from the scope of the waiver. I strongly encourage and expect the stakeholders to implement all the above mentioned condition during the winter season.

Furthermore, since not all of the conditions of the agreement are currently legally enforceable, my services are working on a proposal to amend the Slot Regulation that would allow any future waivers to be subject to certain conditions. Deliberations are ongoing on how to allocate slots where an airport may have to reduce capacity due to health and sanitary measures in light of a pandemic or how to return to a normal slot regime once air traffic starts picking up to more stable levels, potentially still below pre-COVID-19 ones. The initiative is currently undergoing a public consultation which can be accessed [here](#). My services are committed to progress on this as quickly as possible, however, the legislative process will likely not be concluded before early 2021. I understand that all parties to the agreement remain committed to adhering to the conditions on a voluntary basis in the meantime.

I hope this information provides airlines with the necessary certainty to plan their schedules effectively and I count on all stakeholders to implement the agreement, including the additional condition described above. I finally encourage you to publish all agreed conditions to generate adherence to them by all parties.

Yours faithfully,



Adina VĂLEAN