

[REDACTED] (DG MOVE)  
European Commission  
Wetstraat 200 – [REDACTED]  
B – 1049 Brussels

2 September 2020

Dear [REDACTED],

### Slot alleviation during COVID-19 pandemic

I am writing to request an extension of the airport slot alleviation until the end of the Winter 2020/2021 (W20/21) season, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virgin Atlantic, like many airlines and airports across Europe, including trade associations IATA and ACI Europe, are requesting that the waiver of the 80:20 'Use it or lose it' slot rule is extended until the end of the W20/21 season (Article 10 of Regulation EC 95/93).

We welcomed the granting earlier this year of slot alleviation for the full summer 2020 season, in response to the unprecedented collapse in global air travel as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, global travel restrictions remain in place and international air travel has yet to restart at any significant scale, with airlines operating a fraction of their services compared to their originally planned schedules. We also anticipate operating very limited services during the W20/21 season, which is typically the quieter and more challenging trading period for airlines. Furthermore, the forecast recovery of air travel continues to be revised outward. In summary:

- Our forward bookings across the entire W20/21 season are down 76% year on year,
- We expect to operate approximately only 25% of our capacity by the end of 2020,
- IATA has forecast that long haul bookings for November are nearly 60% lower year on year,
- IATA has also forecast that global passenger volumes will not recover to 2019 levels until 2024 at the earliest.

Granting a waiver until the end of the W20/21 season would ensure airlines can come through the most difficult winter season they have ever faced well placed to support the global economic recovery. Granting a full waiver now would provide airlines the certainty they need to begin planning their schedules and resources. This would enable them reduce unnecessary costs, and avoid any further restructuring of their businesses in addition to the tens of thousands of jobs that have already been lost from airlines, airports and the wider aviation industry.

I recognise there have been discussions within the Commission on granting the slot waiver extension in two stages, as a result of earlier differences in the position of airlines and airports. However, with the industry now reaching an agreed joint position, a waiver for the full W20/21 season should be announced as early as possible, avoiding any unnecessary delays and uncertainty when the industry can least afford it.

The COVID-19 pandemic remains an unpredictable, constantly evolving, and challenging crisis. I would like to thank you and your colleagues for your support and continued efforts to safeguard the future of our important industry, ensuring we are well placed to support the economic recovery to come.

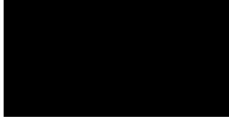
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# virgin atlantic



If you would like any further information, or if I can be of any assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Cc. [Redacted]

Cc. [Redacted]