



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Directorate E - Aviation
The Director

Brussels, 11 June 2020

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International Air Transport Association
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Airlines For Europe
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Airlines International Representation in Europe
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Airports Council International Europe
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
European Airport Coordinators Association
[REDACTED]

Subject: Slot allocation for the winter 2020/2021 season

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to you to follow up on my letter of 16 April regarding the operation of the waiver to the slots regulation which was adopted by the European Union at the end of March.

The coordination of the winter 2020/2021 season is now of course well underway. Efforts by airports, airlines, coordinators and others in the air transport sector to plan effectively for the season are hampered by uncertain demand for air travel as we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis. The slot waiver regulation provides for a possible extension

covering all or part of the winter season. Nonetheless, the coordination of the winter season will have taken place in the knowledge that the season will be marked as one of recovery from the effects of the coronavirus and that further unpredictable changes in demand might still occur in the coming months. We are therefore in effect in uncharted territory. Regulators need to ensure that regulations can be applied in a way which takes account of this unprecedented situation.

As a general principle, therefore, in order to minimise possibly adverse effects of an extended waiver on competition and passengers, it is of paramount importance that airlines only retain, at the start of the season, those slots they are firmly intending to use. This should be done in accordance with the usual deadlines provided for in the slots regulation and the Worldwide Airport Slots Guidelines. I would point out that it is unlikely that a decision on extending the slots waiver will emerge before the series return deadline. However, it has come to the attention of DG MOVE that some airlines might have requested all their historic slots for the coming winter season, despite the unlikelihood that they will all be operated. There is a risk that a large number of requested slots may not be operated but yet not returned to the pool in sufficient time to allow other carriers to use them. It is therefore important that coordinators are vigilant in this regard and they should use, if necessary, the possibility to withdraw series from airlines where it is evident that they are not going to be used 80% of the time.

I call upon coordinators, airport and airlines to come together to identify how these problems can be avoided in the coming season. I would encourage you to give thought to best practices to be agreed prior to the deadlines for the return of slots and series for the winter 2020/2021 scheduling season. In addition to the issue of returning unused slots before the slot return deadline, these practices should also establish working deadlines for the timely return of unused slots during the season, in particular should cancellations prove necessary as a result of further marked changes to demand.

This work could help the Commission in coming to a satisfactory decision on the extension of the slots waiver. I am counting on your cooperation on this important matter, in the interest of the sector's recovery and continued connectivity for European consumers.

Should you have any queries, the responsible Policy Officer is [REDACTED]
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229-[REDACTED]).

Yours sincerely,

(e-signed)
[REDACTED]