



18 May 2020

Read ECA PR [‘Safely navigating through the COVID-19 crisis’](#)

EU level response

European Commission

- On the occasion of the European Parliament’s plenary session last week (13-14 May), the European Commission presented a [Communication](#) (13 May) on how to safely resume travel. The Communication consists of an [overall strategy](#), [common approach](#) to lifting restrictions, [framework](#) to support the gradual re-establishment of transport, and [recommendation](#) on vouchers (making the vouchers as attractive as possible to passengers, however de facto maintaining the cash refund option for anyone whose flight was cancelled).

European Parliament

- On 11 May, the EU Commissioner for the Green Deal Frans Timmermans [exchanged](#) views with the European Parliament’s Transport Committee (TRAN) saying that the European Commission will take the necessary steps to disable unconditional airline bailouts in post-virus recovery plans (e.g. by urging national governments to [set green criteria for public money](#)). Timmermans also re-iterated his appetite for taxing jet fuel in the future. (also see [article](#) in *Euractiv*, 12 May)
- On 11 May, the EU Commissioner for Transport Adina-loana Valean [exchanged](#) views with the European Parliament’s Environment Committee (ENVI) pushing for post-COVID19 sustainable mobility through the implementation of CORSIA ([article](#) in *greenaironline.com*, 13 May).
- On 13-14 May, the European Parliament (EP) held a [plenary session](#) during which the parliamentarians (MEPs) voted on a [resolution](#) on the long-term EU budget and recovery fund urging the Council of the EU to stop procrastinating (see the press release [here](#)).

Developments at national level

Austria

- **Austrian Airlines** has [decided](#) to extend the suspension of regular flight operations until 7 June.

Belgium

- **Brussels Airlines** is planning to resume flight operations with a reduced network offer (depending on the market demand) as from 15 June ([article](#) in *Aviation24.be*, 14 May).

France

- As of 11 May [wearing](#) facial mask on board **Air France** aircrafts is mandatory. In addition, checking of passengers' body temperature is being gradually implemented on all flights. **Air France** is also planning to update its flight schedule for the summer period at the beginning of June.

Iceland

- The Icelandic Airline Pilots Association (**FIA**) will soon vote on a new collective-bargaining agreement which significantly increases productivity and flexibility for the company ([article](#) in *GlobeNewswire*, 15 May).

Ireland

- On 12 May, **Ryanair** publicly [announced](#) the return to 40% of normal flight schedules from 1 July. Crew and passengers will be obliged to wear face masks and pass temperature checks. In parallel, **Ryanair** [cut](#) (15 May) over 250 jobs in Dublin, Stansted, Madrid and Wroclaw offices. The final horizon is to reach 3.000 job cuts and 20% pay cuts to adapt to the declined demand.

Italy

- The Italian government has indicated that the restructured **Alitalia** which emerges from the air transport crisis needs to "focus strongly on long-haul transport with new transatlantic alliances being under considerations" ([article](#) in *FlightGlobal*, 10 May).
- On 12 May, the periodical *Messaggero* [reported](#) that Blue Air, easyJet, Norwegian, Ryanair, Volotea and Vueling (altogether representing more than 50% of the Italian short-haul air traffic) have formed the new **Italian Association of Low Fares Airlines**. The agenda of the new association focuses on a plea to the Italian government to choose a non-discriminatory approach protecting the air transport as a whole sector and not a single airline.

Netherlands

- As of 11 May [wearing](#) facial masks on board **KLM** aircrafts is mandatory for both passengers and cabin crew. For the time being, this measure will apply until 31 August. Following the European Commission's [Communication](#) on vouchers (13 May), **KLM** has [updated](#) its voucher policy accordingly (now offering the choice of a voucher or a cash refund to customers).

UK

- After the re-launch of negotiations between **IAG** and Globalia to acquire **Air Europa** for €1 billion (see [article](#) in *AviTrader*, 24 April), the IAG CEO Willie Walsh has announced that the acquisition price will have to be re-visited in light of the coronavirus crisis. It will be crucial for Air Europa to prove that actions have been taken to reduce their cash outflow during the pandemic ([article](#) in *FlightGlobal*, 7 May).

EU stakeholders' reactions

- In a [press release](#) (11 May), **ERA** supports several key measures taken across Europe to restart safe air operations and calls for a harmonized common framework at the European level instead of imposing quarantines that will only delay the restart. Also, **ERA** keeps growing in numbers. It enrolled 8 new members back in [April](#) and now it counts 3 additional members on top (Air Serbia, German Airways and SprintAir). ERA's number of airlines now total 64 ([article](#) in *Aviation24.be*, 16 May).
- In the expectation of the issuance of the European Commission's Communication, various stakeholders expressed their views:
 - **ECA** published a press release '[Safely navigating through the COVID-19 crisis](#)' (12 May) calling for harmonized and mutually accepted rules on how to operate safe flights with COVID present in our societies. The fact that aircraft is a very safe place for passengers is emphasized, provided that equipment which filters and regularly replaces air is fitted and serviceable.
 - **ACI Europe** together with **IATA** also [called](#) (13 May) for a fully aligned way as regards the lifting of travel restrictions and border controls. In this approach the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) should be continuously consulted to ensure proportionate measures.
 - **A4E**, **AIRE**, **ERA** and **IATA** '[decried](#)' the non-binding recommendations on vouchers as confusing and creating the risk of market distortion. The airlines representatives now call upon the EU Member States in the Council of the EU to temporarily adjust EU Reg. 261/2004.

International updates

- On 11 May, **ICAO** published an informational bulletin '[Implementing a Public Health Corridor to Protect Flight Crew during the COVID-19 Pandemic \(Cargo Operations\)](#)' offering guidance to protect flight crew during cargo operations with the key elements being the use of "clean" crew, "clean" aircraft, "clean" airport facilities and transporting "clean" passengers. Further material addressing humanitarian, repatriation and scheduled passenger flights is under development.
- On 13 May, **IATA** strongly [urged](#) governments around the globe to opt for a temporary risk-based layered approach (e.g. temperature screening, vigorous contact tracing) instead of maintaining quarantine measures.
- On 14 May, **IFALPA** updated its [COVID-19 Guidance For Crews](#) which is to be perceived as general advice about COVID-19 as understood at the date of the publication (contains tips for protection before, during and after flight).