

COVID-19: Open Letter from the European Business Aviation Community

Brussels, 2 April 2020

Dear policy-makers and regulators,

The European Business Aviation community wishes to express our full support for all the measures you have taken so far in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Safety is – and always will be – our priority. Our thoughts are with all the victims and their loved ones affected by this global crisis. We wish to extend our sincere gratitude to all the health workers risking their lives on the frontline of the outbreak. We are also extremely grateful for all those workers maintaining the production and distribution of vital goods and services across Europe and beyond.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a devastating impact on the aviation sector. Just like our partners in the airlines' industry, the 374,000 people who work in the European Business Aviation sector are facing a crisis of unprecedented magnitude and uncertain futures.

In the last week of March, EUROCONTROL observed a decrease of 72% in Business Aviation traffic, with some variations depending on countries or regions. Estimated revenue losses for the thousands of SMEs that make up our sector currently range from 50-90%.

We call on all European and national policy-makers to help safeguard our fragile and essential sector. Together, we need to ensure that as many businesses as possible survive so they can help rebuild our economy by ensuring regional connectivity and providing medical flights when it is the only option to save a life.

How Business Aviation is helping

Business Aviation plays a crucial role in the fight against COVID-19. Many operators specialised in medical and emergency flights are currently providing essential services to communities fighting the pandemic, including for the transport of health workers. But all other medical emergencies have not stopped, and are being handled by Business Aviation operators despite numerous operational challenges and restrictions.

Along with medical and emergency flights, our sector also provides cargo flights, ensuring the transport and delivery of critical medical supplies in Europe and around the world. Repatriation flights are also organised, supporting European and national governments' efforts in reuniting families. Some manufacturers are using their resources to produce essential medical supplies like respirators. Others have made donations to hospitals to help them cope with the additional pressure and demand.

Protecting our sector will require responsibility, action and solidarity from all parties.

- **Responsibility**, as Business Aviation, to ensure everything we do helps to support your efforts in mitigating and overcoming this crisis, including operating during the pandemic;
- **Action**, both to maintain the essential functioning of our sector in the immediate future, and to ensure that once the outbreak is under control, we have maintained the Business Aviation ecosystem. This safeguard is vital to quickly and fully restore our European socio-economic framework;
- **Solidarity**, between Business Aviation companies and national governments to ensure that all critical humanitarian or medical missions can be undertaken smoothly during and after the crisis.

How you can help Business Aviation

On the 18 March, the European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) [called](#) on European and national authorities to consider all recovery and relief measures available to ensure the continuity of our operations.

This continuity can only be ensured if all actors of the Business Aviation value chain are operational, including: operators, commercial airports, regional airports and airfields, FBOs (Business Aviation terminals), ground handlers, fuel suppliers, maintenance organisations, manufacturers, and other dedicated service providers. The challenges faced by Business Aviation companies are numerous: cash flow shortfalls, liquidity, staffing, regulatory, tax issues, etc.

We call on the European institutions, the Member States, Switzerland and the United Kingdom to:

- **Maintain full and effective coordination with our industry** and the associations supporting our sector in Brussels and in the Member States, Switzerland and the United Kingdom;
- **Ensure basic operational continuity** for Business Aviation operators, service providers, manufacturers and supply chain to maintain essential flight operations such as – but not limited to – medical flights, supply of medical equipment, repatriation of citizens to their home countries and the supply of aircraft and parts to ensure such operations can continue;
- **Implement all measures as soon as possible** to ensure that Business Aviation can resume its normal activities as soon as the crisis is over. The packages recently launched by the European institutions will definitively support our sector but additional measures – proposed here – are also essential in consideration of the magnitude of the crisis.

An action plan for Business Aviation is urgently required and should include the following key regulatory and financial measures:

- Business Aviation plays a critical role in the mitigation of the pandemic. **We call on national governments to ensure flexibility in the travel restrictions and to even suspend travel bans for Business Aviation flights meeting WHO health requirements**, especially in the case of business aircraft providing medical services, repatriating citizens to their home countries or to delivering aircraft, engines and spare parts that are needed to maintain these operations;
- We support the ongoing EASA coordination and State Competent Authority **efforts to extend aviation staff licences and Airworthiness Review Certificates**. Special consideration is needed for Business Aviation pilot licences as many of the simulators are located outside of EU and thus being affected by both EU and non-EU controlled travel restrictions;

- **All stakeholders in the Business Aviation supply chain should be eligible to benefit from direct support from EU funds**, such as the EU Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative. The access to those financial instruments should be simple, straightforward, and streamlined as most Business Aviation companies are SMEs;
- **Business Aviation companies urgently need liquidity**, via guarantees or credit facilities in order to preserve our 374,000 highly skilled direct and indirect jobs in Europe;
- **All national, regional, local taxes & fees that apply to Business Aviation companies should be suspended**, for at least 6 months or until the industry is back to a sound operational and financial situation;
- **Maximum flexibility regarding the maintenance tasks**, which include interval extensions, certifications, Airworthiness Review Certificates and fast track approvals of staff, should be applied by EASA and Competent Authorities whilst the aircraft airworthiness is maintained.

The following additional measures would also contribute to a prompt recovery from the crisis:

- **National measures to cover the costs of staff who are unable to work** during the current situation should be made urgently available to Business Aviation companies;
- **Changes to the regulatory framework that are not addressing the pandemic must be avoided until the aviation sector fully recovers**. This notably covers the revision of the EU energy taxation directive, non-urgent consultation and rulemaking activities;
- **Ensuring that the required services to handle business aircraft are maintained at all airports** (ATC, Fuel, fire service, handling, access for maintenance personnel, etc.) and preserve a rapid return to full operations.

We look forward to working with you to overcome the COVID-19 crisis and to ensure that our sector can bounce back as rapidly as possible and return to playing our instrumental role in the European socio-economic cohesion.

Yours sincerely,



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