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Joint ACI EUROPE, ATAG, EUROCONTROL press release

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## Congestion threatening social and economic benefits of aviation

*From the joint ACI EUROPE, ATAG, EUROCONTROL, European Commission and IATA Airport Operations Conference, European Parliament, Brussels, 27-29 October*

European Parliament, Brussels, 27 October 2004: Airport congestion will threaten the delivery to our communities of the social and economic benefits of aviation. This emerged as a major theme of the 'Airport Operations Conference' which commenced today at the European Parliament in Brussels. Aviation industry experts agreed on the urgent need for cross-industry cooperation to tackle congestion in Europe's air transport. They highlighted that unless immediate action is taken, airports will become the next major bottleneck beyond 2005.

Roy Griffins, Director General-designate, ACI EUROPE: "Delivery of the economic and social benefits of civil aviation must remain a priority of airports and of legislators. With demand for air travel set to double by 2020, we must not allow our congested airports be choked to death by their own growth. We must enhance cooperation among airports, airlines and air traffic management systems to squeeze every last bit of capacity out of our constrained airports and allow them to grow sustainably. The alternative? Widespread congestion, poor service standards, constraints on expansion, a lack of airline competition, and the abject failure of industry and policy makers to meet the needs of Europe's communities and economies."

He continued: "We must tackle congestion by promoting the collaboration of each and every stakeholder involved in the air transport chain. New strategies must be developed not only to make the best use of available airport infrastructure but also to set out the framework and principles for providing new capacity urgently yet sustainably."

As airports reach their operating limits, congestion threatens the delivery of key social and economic benefits. Aviation provides a unique global network, linking people, countries and cultures. Air transport is essential for world business – over 40% of goods (by value) travel by air. Access to markets and the availability of external and international transport links are essential considerations for enterprises making location decisions – large airports are seen as fundamental national economic motors. Aviation is directly linked to the tourism industry in Europe, generating receipts of 700 million euro per day. Moreover, for every million passengers, each European airport supports some 3,000 jobs of which 50% are generated in the immediate vicinity of the airport.

**ENDS**

### **Note to Editors:**

*Joint ACI EUROPE, ATAG, EUROCONTROL, European Commission and IATA conference*

*Entitled 'Partnership for Change' this high-level conference - taking place at the European Parliament Chamber, Brussels, Belgium, from 27-29 October 2004 - brings together all senior managers and decision makers involved in European airport airside operations to share objectives, problems and experiences - and collectively agree the best way forward.*

*For more information on this free event or for registration purposes, please contact Elisabeth Beheydt: tel.: +32-2-729.31.44, fax: +32-2-729.90.08 or e-mail: [airport.conference@eurocontrol.int](mailto:airport.conference@eurocontrol.int).*

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Airports Council International (ACI) is the only worldwide professional association of airport operators. ACI EUROPE represents over 450 airports in 45 European countries. Member airports handle 90% of commercial air traffic in Europe, welcoming over a billion passengers each year.