



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ECAC/EU DIALOGUE WITH THE EUROPEAN AIR TRANSPORT INDUSTRY**

Vienna, 4 July 2014 — The ECAC/EU Dialogue with the European air transport industry, organised by the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) in cooperation with the European Commission and the Austrian Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology took place in Vienna, on 3-4 July 2014. It brought together more than 170 senior-level aviation decision-makers and industry leaders. Raymond Benjamin, ICAO Secretary General and Tony Tyler, IATA CEO and Director General addressed the Dialogue. As stated by ECAC President, Catalin Radu, who opened the Conference, the Dialogue's objective was "to make concrete proposals for enhancing competitiveness of the European air transport sector".

Participants recognised the positive achievements of the European air transport sector in the past 20 years, such as liberalisation, and the economic and social benefits of aviation and the connectivity that it has brought. Whilst extremely competitive, the sector remains fragile, and there were calls for reflection and a rapid adaptation to maintain and improve the position of Europe at global level.

At a time where the centre of gravity for aviation is moving towards other regions of the world, such a boost to European aviation competitiveness very much depends on the better understanding by governments and the public of the critical value of the air transport sector to the European economy.

Strongly supporting this Conference, Commission Vice-President Siim Kallas, responsible for transport, stated that: *"European aviation today is a success story facing major challenges. Our ambition is to strengthen the EU air transport value chain in order to make it grow and be profitable. We want to deliver high quality jobs, consumer satisfaction, and benefits to the whole EU economy through global and European connectivity. We must keep Europe as a key player in international aviation. At the ECAC/EU Dialogue, industry and Member States' regulators had the opportunity to discuss efficient, constructive and realistic solutions to improve competitiveness in the sector, one of the crucial issues for the years to come."*

Conscious of the diversity of the challenges facing the growth of the sector (e.g., fair competition, financing, taxation, ownership and control, airport and ATM capacities), participants urged for the adoption of a shared vision where regulators and industry would build priorities in terms of regulation, infrastructure development.

Referring to liberalisation and competition in the sector in Europe, participants highlighted the benefits for European economy as a whole, and the lack of recognition of the importance of the aviation industry by regulators and commentators, unlike in other parts of the world where aviation development is at the top of the political agenda. A true, integrated vision for the sector seems to be missing.

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