

Europe's airports seek Brexit position 'to protect traffic...'

The European airport industry has aired its concerns again about 'Brexit' and the potential impact on European air transport as a whole during a public hearing in the European Parliament in Brussels.



This crucial debate comes more than a year after the UK voted to leave the European Union, so increasing uncertainty surrounding the post UK departure scenario.

THE FEAR OF THE CLIFF-EDGE SCENARIO

It also comes at a time where many are concerned that there is a possibility that a so called 'cliff-edge scenario' could materialise, where the UK ends up leaving the EU without any new trading relationship defined or agreed.

'In this context', ACI Europe has called upon the UK to 'urgently' come up with a detailed and comprehensive position on Brexit for aviation to allow it to safeguard and further develop its air connectivity with the EU27 and beyond. As such, ACI says the UK's continued participation in the Single European Aviation Market would cement aviation as a cornerstone of the UK's future prosperity.



ACI Europe Director General Olivier Jankovec is trying to raise awareness around the severity of this issue.

Speaking on the side lines at the hearing, ACI Europe Director General Olivier Jankovec said: "The clock has been ticking since March and negotiations already began last month. Yet, we remain completely in the dark as to what will happen on 1 April 2019 and we have no idea how long this uncertainty will persist.

UK NEEDS CLARIFY ITS POSITION

"The fact that the UK has yet to define a clear and detailed position as to what it wants – not just in terms of its new relationship with the EU, but also about how to transition there – is not helping.

This only results in precious time being lost and potentially increases the risk of a no-deal scenario which should be avoided at all cost, as it could ultimately result in flights between the UK and the EU being suspended."

ACI adds that the uncertainty for aviation is higher than for other sectors, as 'it claims' are disruption risks relating to the aforementioned 'cliff edge scenario'. ACI points out that this is therefore very real as WTO rules do not cover air transport services.

Jankovec said: "While falling back on WTO rules would still be far from ideal and would come with significant costs, it still means businesses can rely on an alternative legal framework allowing them to

Europe's airports seek Brexit position 'to protect traffic...' keep operating and plan for contingencies accordingly.

AVIATION REMAINS VULNERABLE TO LEGAL VACUUM

"That is not the case for aviation. As it now stands, in the absence of a deal on a transition or the future regime, aviation would simply fall into a legal vacuum – which if not addressed could simply mean no flights."

As a result, ACI Europe has also called for aviation to be 'prioritised' as regards the order in which the different sectors will be dealt with when the time comes to negotiate the new UK-EU27 relationship.

It has also urged the UK and each of the EU27 countries to look at what alternative legal framework would apply to aviation in the case of 'a no-deal scenario' – as part of their own contingencies.

This latest hearing was organised by the Committee on Transport and Tourism of the European Parliament and was chaired by Karima Delli, Chair of the Committee. The airport sector was represented by John Holland-Kaye, CEO of Heathrow Airport, Kevin Toland, CEO of daa (Dublin & Cork airports) and Franck Goldnadel, Managing Director, Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.



Heathrow Airport CEO John-Holland Kaye was one of the key executives representing European airports, along with Kevin Toland, CEO of daa (Dublin & Cork airports) and Franck Goldnadel, Managing Director, Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.