**Rafael Schvartzman**
Regional Vice President, Europe

To: Mr. Michel Charles, President of the European Council          23 February 2021

**Evidence-based border restrictions and acceptance of digital solutions key for movement of persons**

Dear President Michel,

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is reaching out to the European Council ahead of the Member States' representatives video conference on 25-26 February 2021, where the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic will be discussed. Regarding the group's discussion on authorisation, production, and distribution of vaccines, and the movement of persons, **the aviation industry urges the European Council and the EU Member States to take the necessary measures for a safe return to normality.**

The pandemic has had devastating effects on all aspects of our society and economies, with air transport being significantly impacted by damaging limitations to movement such as lockdowns and border closures. IATA's most optimistic outlook estimates that in 2021 traffic will be ~50% that of 2019, and stricter restrictions brought on by additional outbreaks and new mutations may worsen these projections, despite the initial optimism followed the arrival and distribution of vaccines.

During its last meeting in January 18, UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee[1] highlighted that the rollout of vaccination plans opened a critical window of opportunity to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and to promote the safe restart of international travel, reasoning with which IATA fully agrees.

- **Evidence-based, proportionate restrictive measures key for movement of persons**

IATA calls on EU Governments to promote the sane development of national plans that allow gradual lifting of both intra-EU and international border impositions. Such roadmaps must consider and identify a set of health indicators (e.g. percentage of the inoculated population, death rates, infection rates, among others) for which there should be a correspondence in terms of policies and gradual alleviation of restrictions, allowing safe cross-border movement. Member States shall continuously ensure that any measure in place is risk- and evidence-based, time-limited, and proportionate, in a demanding but attainable balance between risk and both people and economies' financial sustainability. IATA is committed and fully available to work with all EU Member States in supporting authorities throughout the drafting and deploying of such national health roadmaps for free movement of European citizens.

- **Acceptance of digital solutions key for movement of persons**

IATA also welcomes the proposal made by the EU Health Security Committee on 17 February[2] which agreed on a common list of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests, on the need for its mutual recognition, and on the definition of a common standardised set of data to be included in COVID-19 test result certificates. This breakthrough is vital for the common effort towards reopening borders, and allows industry digital solutions,

[1] https://www.unwto.org/news/global-tourism-crisis-committee-meets-again-to-explore-safe-travel-in-age-of-vaccines
[2] https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/preparedness_response/docs/covid-19_rat_common-list_en.pdf

such as the IATA Travel Pass[3] to contribute to that shared goal. The IATA Travel Pass ensures that travellers remain in control of personal data by protecting its privacy in strict compliance with international standards on data privacy and control. Moreover, each traveller can store and securely manage personal data plus COVID-19-related information (e.g. test results, vaccination certificates, immunity certificates,…) while providing governments and authorities - but also passengers and crew - with the needed confidence in each passengers' health status.

The IATA Travel Pass allows authorities to verify the certificate's authenticity and the individual's identity, providing security, and fighting the increasing criminality associated with certificates' fraud. Additionally, this digital solution can verify the applicable legal frameworks both at departure and arrival jurisdictions— based on existing IATA solutions and in the information provided by national authorities and stakeholders— ensuring that the traveller has access to all regulations applying to that journey. The IATA Travel Pass Q&A[4] provides additional information that the EU Member States may find of use.

Considering the broad consensus around the safe reopening of borders a critical missing element to restore passengers' trust is predictability and confidence in Governmental actions, which in the eyes of the aviation industry, can only be more efficiently attained if national plans are in place. For all the above, **IATA urges the European Council to discuss these critical matters during the video conference on the current situation of the COVID19 pandemic** next Thursday, and to urge the Member States:

a) to commit to the development and deployment of national roadmaps with a nexus between health-based progress and the gradual reopening of borders, within specified temporal horizons;

b) to use intra-EU digital certificates and credentials and promote its international acceptance, prearranging the conditions for international air travel to be restored when health conditions allow it; and

c) to agree on the crucial role of secure digital solutions, such as the IATA Travel Pass, that facilitate travel by empowering passengers and Governments with the needed systemic confidence.

Kind regards,

Rafael Schvartzman
Regional Vice President, Europe

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[3] https://www.iata.org/en/programs/passenger/travel-pass/
[4] https://www.iata.org/contentassets/2b02a4f452384b1fbae0a4c40e8a5d0c/travel-pass-faqs.pdf