Members of Belgian Travel Confederation

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Irresponsible and Reckless:
Belgium Raises Taxes in Aviation's Worst Crisis in Decades

At a time when the aviation industry is battling the worst fuel crisis in decades, the Belgian government has chosen not to support a sector essential to the country's connectivity and economy, but to tax it even harder. The decision to increase aviation taxes despite exploding kerosene prices, rising CO_2 costs, inflation, and mounting operational pressures is both alarming and deeply short-sighted. The aviation and tourism industry therefor sound the alarm.

With fuel prices having effectively doubled, airlines are already absorbing unprecedented cost increases in a sector where kerosene historically accounted for roughly 35% of ticket prices. To impose additional fiscal pressure under these circumstances sends a troubling signal: that Belgium is prepared to weaken one of its most strategic industries at the very moment resilience and competitiveness matter most.

"Taxing aviation in the midst of a fuel crisis is a fundamentally poor and unwise policy choice."

Vincent Snauwaert
President of BAR Belgium

It is also striking that the additional revenue is directed towards the general state budget to patch up deficits stemming from years of public financial mismanagement, rather than being reinvested in strengthening mobility, infrastructure, or competitiveness. At the same time, passengers continue to face recurring disruption: widespread industrial action across the transport sector, prolonged queues at border controls, and a growing number of missed flights due to systemic bottlenecks that remain unresolved.

Equally difficult to reconcile with this policy direction is the lack of coherence with broader economic objectives. Aviation is not only a mobility sector but a critical enabler of trade, investment, tourism, and employment. Increasing its cost base in the middle of a structural cost crisis directly undermines those same policy goals.

Finally, there is an increasing disconnect between Belgium's approach and that of its European peers. While several countries are lowering aviation-related taxes or actively exploring relief measures to preserve competitiveness during this prolonged crisis, Belgium once again appears determined to move against the prevailing European trend.

"Aviation and tourism are not a luxury, but essential links in the economic value chain."

Koen Van den Bosch
CEO of VVR

The consequences are inevitable. Air travel will become more expensive for passengers, Belgium's competitive position will deteriorate, and the country risks undermining its own connectivity, tourism sector, and wider economy.

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About BAR Belgium

The Board of Airline Representatives in Belgium (BAR Belgium) represents the interests of 28 international airlines operating in Belgium. It acts as the voice of airlines towards the government and in social dialogue, facilitating collaboration with authorities and promoting a globally connected aviation sector.

About VVR

The **Vereniging van Vlaamse Reisbureaus (VVR)** represents travel agencies and tour operators in Flanders. It acts as the voice of the travel trade towards government and industry partners, promoting accessible travel, fair competition, and a strong, connected tourism sector.

About UPAV

The **Union Professionnelle des Agences de Voyages (UPAV)** represents travel agencies in the French-speaking region of Belgium. It acts as the voice of the travel trade towards government and stakeholders, supporting professional travel services and a competitive, accessible tourism sector.

About ABTO

The **Association of Belgian Travel Organisers (ABTO)** represents Belgian tour operators. It acts as the voice of the outbound travel industry towards government and stakeholders, promoting a competitive, sustainable, and well-regulated travel market.

About BATM

The **Belgian Association of Travel Management (BATM)** represents corporate travel management companies in Belgium. It advocates for the business travel sector towards policymakers and industry partners, promoting efficient, sustainable, and globally connected corporate mobility.

About BTC

The **Belgian Travel Confederation (BTC)** is the umbrella organisation of the Belgian travel industry. It brings together UPAV, VVR and ABTO, and represents the sector towards policymakers and stakeholders in Belgium and Europe.

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