



## **Air Europa – Connected Ground Operations and Digital ETL Enablement**

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Airline operations increasingly rely on connectivity to enable real time aircraft diagnostics and maintenance, flight optimisation, passenger journey monitoring and baggage tracking. Within the scope of the GSMA Fusion initiative, the most immediate opportunities lie in the ground phases of the flight cycle, encompassing terminal operations, ground handling, arrival processes and aircraft turnaround between flights.

As a leading European airline committed to digital transformation, Air Europa is modernising critical operations through the deployment of a fully digital end to end Electronic Technical Log process across its fleet. These systems are essential to improving safety, reducing turnaround times and optimising maintenance scheduling.

Air Europa has a long-standing culture of innovation in communications, including the introduction of the world's first **Aeronautical Telecommunication Network** (ATN) certified aircraft, early operational use of Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC) and most recently full digitalisation of the Technical Logbook process. This mindset underpins our interest in advancing mobile enabled operational connectivity.

The success of this transformation depends on reliable, high performance mobile connectivity at airport aprons, gates and maintenance stands. Air Europa therefore requests exposure of GSMA Open Gateway aligned Network APIs, specifically Quality on Demand, across priority markets to enable predictable, prioritised and interoperable mobile connectivity for operational aviation traffic.

### **The Operational Challenge**

Airline operations represent a highly optimised, time critical global ecosystem. During aircraft turnaround, cockpit and ground crews must exchange operational data including maintenance logs, fault reports, load sheets and flight documentation.

These data exchanges frequently occur during peak congestion windows, particularly immediately after landing when passengers reactivate devices and network demand naturally increases.

Unpredictable mobile performance at gates and aprons risks becoming a material operational bottleneck, delaying digital clearance for departure and impacting punctuality.

The challenge is not limited to seamless connectivity. It extends to connectivity governance, including:

- Reducing reliance on operator specific roaming behaviour
- Enabling API driven management of Quality of Service regardless of location

- Minimising operational friction associated with multiple providers, credentials and authentication mechanisms
- Mitigating coverage grey areas through increased predictability
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Dynamic optimisation based on traffic type, priority and cost is increasingly essential.

## **Industry and Infrastructure Context**

Mobile networks are not positioned to replace satellite connectivity or ACARS for in flight operations. Rather, 4G and 5G networks represent a complementary capability, primarily supporting ground phase operations.

A significant proportion of the global fleet consists of legacy aircraft, and given supply chain constraints and the long operational life of aviation assets, this reality will persist for many years. Even where newer technologies may offer theoretical substitution, the cost, complexity and timescales of retrofit justify long term coexistence.

In this environment, cost per megabyte becomes a legitimate optimisation driver, enabling traffic to be matched to the most appropriate connectivity technology and ensuring the continued relevance of mobile networks for operational use cases.

Destination connectivity environments are highly heterogeneous. Major European hubs present a different operational context from Visual Flight Rules (VFR) or leisure focused destinations in Latin America, or even operations into military aerodromes. Airlines cannot depend on the individual business cases of each airport for deployment of airline accessible private networks or dense segregated Wi Fi infrastructure.

A globally standardised, interoperable Network API approach is therefore critical.

## **Use Cases**

Representative use cases include:

- Electronic Technical Log synchronisation during aircraft turnaround
- Provision of up-to-date planning, weather and operational information to flight crews
- Cabin crew access to passenger information and special baggage hold status
- Remote expert support for maintenance teams enabled by video interaction
- Ground staff access to detailed load information and remote medical support
- Biometric identity validation and secure authentication services
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While no single “killer use case” is anticipated, a distributed set of incremental enhancements across multiple operational domains is expected to deliver meaningful cumulative value. Of these, ETL synchronisation during turnaround represents the most immediate and measurable priority.

## **API Requirement**

Air Europa calls on Mobile Network Operators operating within its priority markets to expose the following capabilities aligned to GSMA Open Gateway standards:

### **Primary Requirement**

- Quality on Demand API

## **Supporting Capabilities**

- Application profiling to differentiate operational traffic
- Predictable latency and throughput assurance for time critical data
- Dynamic network resource allocation during aircraft turnaround
- Logical separation of cockpit and operational traffic from passenger or public flows
- Connectivity visibility and performance insight to support planning stage decision making

True interoperability across operators and commercially consistent models are prerequisites for scalability.

## **Geographic Scope**

Immediate priority markets include:

**Argentina**

**Brazil**

**Colombia**

**Dominican Republic**

**France**

**Germany**

**Italy**

**Netherlands**

**Panama**

**Paraguay**

**Peru**

**Portugal**

**Spain**

**Switzerland**

**United Kingdom**

**United States**

**Uruguay**

Broader global applicability is anticipated subject to standardised implementation across additional markets.

## **Timescales and Deployment Horizon**

Air Europa is progressing fleet wide digital ETL deployment as part of its broader operational digitalisation strategy. Initial API enablement and live validation at selected hub and focus airports is sought within the next 12 to 24 months.

Scaling beyond initial markets will depend on measurable operational performance improvements, interoperable multi operator implementation and clarity around service level agreements and commercial frameworks.

## **Expected Impact**

Exposure of Quality on Demand and related Network APIs would:

- Protect time critical operational data in congested airport environments
- Reduce turnaround delays
- Improve punctuality and adherence to operational targets
- Enable fully paperless workflows aligned to sustainability objectives
- Enhance safety through reliable real time data exchange
- Position mobile networks as critical infrastructure within the connected aviation ecosystem

## **Scale of the opportunity in turnaround efficiency**

Airline operational performance is measured in minutes, and minutes translate directly into cost. A widely used rule of thumb in airline operations is that each minute of delay can cost an

airline around €150, once crew, fuel burn, stand and gate conflicts, missed slots, passenger disruption handling and network knock on effects are considered.

This matters because delay is not an edge case. Across Europe, the average delay per flight was 17.5 minutes in 2024, and only 72.4 percent of flights arrived within 15 minutes of schedule. Even when looking only at Air Traffic Flow Management delays, IATA estimates that ATFM delays have cost airlines and passengers EUR 17.5 billion since 2015, in 2025 prices. Comparable operating cost benchmarks show the same order of magnitude in other regions, with US passenger airlines reporting average aircraft block time costs of \$100.76 per minute in 2024. Turnaround performance is one of the most controllable levers airlines have to prevent delays propagating through the daily rotation.

Even small, repeatable reductions in ground time variability can create outsized benefits because recovered minutes protect on time departure, preserve slots, reduce recovery actions later in the day, and improve aircraft and crew utilisation. This SoR therefore targets the conversion of turnaround operations from reactive to programmable, using CAMARA Network APIs to prioritise time critical data flows and actions exactly when and where they are needed.

### **Collaboration and Next Steps**

Air Europa welcomes the GSMA Open Gateway initiative and participates as a founding partner of the Fusion Aviation workgroup. We are committed to collaborative engagement with GSMA Fusion, Mobile Network Operators, airport authorities and aviation partners to define interoperable, standardised and commercially viable Network API solutions.

Given the maturity of enabling technologies and the urgency of digital transformation in aviation, this joint exploration is timely.