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Dear Government of Austria, Government of Lower Austria and City of Vienna,

The international climate community applauds the recent decision by the Federal administrative court in Vienna to block the expansion of Vienna airport as incompatible with Austria's climate obligations. Aviation remains the most carbon intensive mode of transport, currently responsible for 2.6% of Austria's emissions and have grown 123% from 1990 when it represented 1.8% of Austrian emissions. Globally its emissions are, unchecked, expected to grow by up to 300% in 2050 and consume one-quarter of the remaining carbon budget to stay within the 1.5°C limit in the Paris Agreement which Austria has ratified.

The Court's ruling is a recognition of the inability of the aviation sector to expand in a manner which takes into account the public interest of climate mitigation, and which is consistent with Austria's domestic, constitutional and international legal responsibilities. No effective measures currently exist to mitigate the sector's substantial and growing climate impact. Aviation remains uniquely exempt from fuel taxation and VAT, artificially inflating its growth and undermining the incentive to improve efficiencies or strengthen alternatives to aviation, such as rail.

Proponents of airport expansion will claim that the recently agreed Carbon Offset and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA) permits aviation to expand. However this measure is wholly incompatible with the Paris Agreement: not only is its target insufficient for the Agreement's 1.5°C limit, but its reliance on offsets is unsustainable given the Agreement's requirement for all states and sectors to reduce emissions. Its limited environmental effectiveness is called into question if it is used by industry as a 'licence to grow'.

Only one-quarter of aviation emissions are included in EU ETS, a policy which is currently failing and needs to be substantially reformed. This is especially true of the aviation provisions, which provide the sector with privileged treatment over other sectors due to the static cap and generous allocation of free allowances. Not only does EU ETS need to be reformed but additional measures will be needed to rein in the sector's emissions, such as ending its fuel tax, VAT exemptions and ending airport expansions.



The proposed expansion of Vienna airport represents a dangerously incoherent policy. While in Austria a phase out of coal is in sight, part of the estimated 1.5m tCO₂e reduction goal would be negated by this airport expansion. Such mixed signals undermine our shared goal of winning public support for action on climate change.

We call on you to respect this decision and, in the interest of current and future generations, block any expansion of the emissions from the aviation sector.

Sincerely,

William Todts

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On behalf of: Greenpeace, Climate Action Network Europe (CAN - Europe), Transport and Environment (T&E - Belgium), Carbon Market Watch (Belgium), Aviation Environment Federation (AEF - United Kingdom), Dreikönigsaktion (DKA - Austria), Katholische Hochschuljugend Österreich (KHJÖ - Austria), Koordinierungsstelle der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz für internationale Entwicklung und Mission (KOO - Austria), Fondation Nicolas Hulot pour la Nature et l'Homme (France), Réseau Action Climat (RAC-F - France), Abibiman Foundation-Tema (Ghana), Global 2000 (Austria), Natur og Ungdom - Young Friends of the Earth Norway (NU - Norway), Alofa Tuvalu (France), Naturvernforbundet - Friends of the Earth Norway (Norway), Framtiden i våre hender (Norway), Welthaus Innsbruck (Austria), Spire (Norway), Bellona Foundation (Norway), Friends of the Earth Denmark (NOAH - Denmark), Association transport et environnement (ATE - Switzerland), Mobilität mit Zukunft (VCO - Austria), Verkehrsclub Deutschland e.V. (VCD - Germany), Transform Scotland (United Kingdom), Clean Air Action Group (CAAG - Hungary), Ecologistas en Acción (Spain), Inter-Environnement Wallonie (IEW - Belgium), Ecocity (Greece), Focus, association for sustainable development (FOCUS - Slovenia) and Klimabündnis Österreich (Austria).