

# Planned Changes to Night Operations Restriction Rules (Noise Reduction) for Lisbon Airport

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A set of measures aimed at reducing the noise impact generated by nighttime flight operations at Lisbon's Humberto Delgado Airport (AHD) were approved by Resolution of the Council of Ministers on 7 March 2025. The new set of planned rules should be enforced during the transition to the future New Lisbon Airport.

As the Parliament was subsequently dissolved (on 11 March), prompting the need for early elections, it remains to be known whether these measures will actually be implemented by the new government soon to be elected.

The set of measures can be divided into two initiatives:

### **I. Restrictions on night flight operations**

The government has ordered the National Civil Aviation Authority (ANAC) to perform an assessment on the practical impact of the implementation of the proposed measures, identifying the domestic law that needs to be amended and also its conformity with the applicable European Union law (including guaranteeing a “balanced approach”). These measures are based on the recommendations of the Night Flights Working Group, which delivered its final report in July 2022.

No dates have yet been set for the implementation of the new rules. The proposed measures are as follows:

#### **1. Noise Abatement Procedures**

The first measure consists of evaluating alternatives to the airport's current northbound take-off routes, with the aim of reducing the number of population exposed to high levels of noise.

#### **2. Imposition of a hard-curfew period between 01h00m and 05h00m**

There is currently a maximum of 91 permitted aircraft movements per week, between 00h00m and 06h00m, at Lisbon airport. In addition, the following restrictions based on the noise level produced by each aircraft (as per the aircraft noise certificate) also currently apply:

- Aircraft classified at levels 8 and 16 (noise level greater than 98.9 EPNdB) cannot be scheduled for night-time period;
- Aircraft classified at level 4 (noise level between 96 and 98.9 EPNdB) cannot be scheduled to take-off on scheduled services during the night-time period;
- Aircrafts classified as level 2 (noise level between 93 and 95.9 EPNdB) can operate between 00h00m and 00h30m, and from 05h00m onwards;
- Aircraft classified at levels 0; 0.5 and 1 (noise level below 93 EPNdB) are not subject to any night-time restrictions (beyond the cap of 91 movements per week).

There will now be an absolute ban on all flight operations at Lisbon airport between 01h00m and 05h00m, during which no slots can be allocated. The new measure significantly changes the current rules imposing a hard-curfew on all flights that were previously allowed to operate in said night period (see table above). However, exceptions to the operating restrictions will continue to be available, namely for emergency situations and in cases of force majeure.

### **3. Extension of the hard-curfew period for high-noise level aircraft (23h00m to 07h00m)**

The absolute flight ban for the “noisiest aircrafts” (a concept still to be defined but that, for now, can be compared with noise levels 8 and 16) is extended to the period between 23h00m and 07h00m, whereas the previous restriction was limited to the period between 00h00m and 06h00m (i.e. additional 2-hour ban). This will entail a significant impact on the slots currently allocated at Lisbon airport and this change will have to comply with EU legislation (Council Regulation (EEC) No 95/93 of 18 January 1993 on slots allocation and Regulation (EU) No 598/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on noise-related operating restrictions).

## **II. “Less Noise Project”**

An investment of 10 million euros is being planned by the government to finance construction works to improve the acoustic insulation of residential buildings near Lisbon airport.

This financial package, planned for 2025 and 2026, shall be implemented by the City Councils of Lisbon, Loures, Vila Franca de Xira and Almada, which will be responsible for launching the respective calls for tenders.



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