

Resolution to the Commission of the European Union, DG TREN October 30th, 2007

1. The eleven regional public and public-equivalent bodies as partners of the EUROPLANE project,

- 1.1 Having joined forces across seven EU countries to further intensify the networking of regional airports and regional transport authorities under the framework of the EU INTERREG III C Programme in order to ensure the sustainable operation of regional airports and improve of their surrounding regions' economic and social growth as well as accessibility (see Annexes 1 and 2);
- 1.2 Recognizing the considerable contribution of regional airport regions' cooperation to further the cohesion across the European Union;
- 1.3 Taking into account the strategic objectives of EU policies (including White Papers) for the improvement of regional accessibility, social and economic cohesion, spatial development, and regional competitiveness (see Annex 3);
- 1.4 Pointing to the findings about structural policy challenges for the development of regional airports (see Annex 4) identified in the course of the EUROPLANE activity report "Airport Systems in Europe: The case of Berlin-Brandenburg";



2 Having undertaken the EUROPLANE project that has yielded numerous valuable findings have concluded that:

- 2.1 Regional airports constitute an important element in regional economic development as they stimulate economic development among others in rural and peripheral areas by providing vital air transport connectivity, especially for time-critical industries.
- 2.2 Regional airports provide a crucial infrastructure element necessary to ensure regional accessibility and market access for people and goods flows to and from national and international economic centres.
- 2.3 Regional airports fulfil economic and social functions in areas with oftentimes below average population densities and thus promote the continued emergence of a polycentric spatial development pattern across the European Union, an overarching goal of European spatial development and regional competitiveness policy.
- 2.4 Despite the general recognition of the manifold benefits of well-functioning regional airports by the European Union, regional airports still face numerous challenges to their sustainable development on the European and on the national levels.



3. and therefore call upon the Commission of the European Union to establish policies for the implementation of the following measures:

- 3.1 Encouragement of national and regional governments and authorities to support the sustainable development of the system of regional airports as a vital element of an effective multimodal transportation infrastructure.



Specifically, public bodies should be discouraged from focussing their support solely on primary network airports. Furthermore, it is unacceptable if state bodies abuse their approval authority to protect their own airports from competition. Substantial public investments into primary airport infrastructure should only be made after thorough consideration of the effects on the whole airport system (i.e. Milan, London), including regional airports. A stronger consideration of regional airports will contribute to a polycentric spatial structure, which is a key EU objective as documented in the EUROPEAN SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE, chapter 3.2.



- 3.2 Review of the existing slot allocation rules at coordinated EU national and international network airports to ensure that existing services to regional airports can be retained and developed, and the emergence of new routes is promoted.



In this regard, we reject the currently considered so-called efficiency optimisation of slot use (see consultations on the application of council regulation (EEC) 793/2004 ON COMMON RULES FOR THE ALLOCATION OF SLOTS AT COMMUNITY AIRPORTS) which will systematically encourage long-haul high seat density flights between main network airports and thus unduly limit the availability of slots for flights to and from regional airports. This will hamper regional development and conflict with the objectives for regional development and competitiveness of the Lisbon Agenda.



- 3.3 Further liberalization of air transport by way of negotiation of air service agreements (ASAs) between the EU and third countries with the goal of facilitating access to all airports in any given third country for all Community air carriers, and likewise allowing any given third country air carrier access to all Community airports.



This is of particular interest to regional airports, which can then establish direct services to a point in a third country rather than an indirect service via an airport hub, especially if the hub is congested and/or if slots are not available in adequate numbers (also see Annex 1). The development of services at regional airports must not be restricted in order to protect the market position of the major carriers through their hub airports.



Supporting Information

Annex 1 – Structural political challenges for regional airport development

Annex 2 – Overview of external references in accordance with the objectives of the EUROPLANE resolution

Annex 3 – Overview of participating entities

Annex 4 – Partners' letters of commitment



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Annex 1 – Structural policy challenges for regional airport development*

- Regional airports are embraced by the European Union for their merits in terms of economic development, social cohesion, and polycentric spatial development. Nevertheless, regional airports encounter substantial opposition on their path to sustainable development and operation:
 - Large established network airports fear additional competition. There is intense lobbying by these airports in order to delay or avoid the development of existing and new regional airports.
 - Regional and/or national governments or subsidiaries of theirs holding ownership stakes in network airports tend to take up a stance of “protecting” their investment. This may lead to substantial conflict of interest, as these public bodies are responsible for effective competition while, at the same time, committed to profitable operations of their network airports. By protecting publicly owned network airports effective competition is reduced.
 - Influential full service carriers (i.e. former flag carriers) often vigorously oppose regional airports, as in the past regional airports have proven to be fertile grounds for the expansion of competing low cost flight operations. Ryanair is a prominent example of a low cost carrier almost exclusively favoring regional airports.
- In total, regional airports may face a three-pronged opposition of major network airports, large full service carriers, and public or public-equivalent bodies holding stakes in network airports[†]. These parties opposing the further development of regional airports tend to have strong political influence which can delay regional airport development or even render it entirely impossible.
- Despite these impediments well-operating regional airports not only have positive effects on regional accessibility, regional economic development, and social cohesion, they can also provide effective competition in regions otherwise served by a single network airport only. Thus, an airport

* identified in the course of the case study “Multi Airport Systems in Europe: The Case of Berlin-Brandenburg”

[†] The German “Initiative Luftverkehr” is a noteworthy example of a lobbying group explicitly combining hub airports (Frankfurt, Munich), a network carrier (Lufthansa), and high-level political support (German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building, and Urban Affairs).

monopoly can be prevented through the corrective competition posed by a nearby regional airport.

- All passengers – even those not using regional airports – greatly benefit from efficient airport competition, as it tends to result in stronger customer focus, lower airport fees and charges, and higher levels of service. This is especially true as the regional airports' attractiveness for low cost carriers incites traditional airlines at nearby network airports to reconsider their ticket retail prices to the benefit of travelers.
- Obviously, the development of regional airports should only be supported to a degree where these airports promise financial viability in the long term.

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Annex 2 – Overview of external references in accordance with the objectives of the EUROPLANE resolution

- ACI Europe: position paper “Airports must be involved in the establishment of Community air service agreements with third countries”, May 2003
- An agenda of economic and social renewal for Europe, Contribution of the European Commission to the Spring European Council (COM 2000/7), Lisbon 23 - 24th March 2000
- AOPA-Germany / German Business Aviation Association / IDRF: “Bedeutung der Allgemeinen Luftfahrt, Business Aviation, Regionalflughäfen und Verkehrslandeplätze in Deutschland“ (“Significance of General Aviation, Business Aviation, Regional Airports and Airfields in Germany”), Berlin/Egelsbach/Mannheim, February 2007
- Assembly of European Regions (AER): “Regional airports need the support of the EU and no overregulation”, Poznan, September 2007
- Delivering Lisbon – Reforms for the enlarged Union (COM 2004/29), Report from the Commission to the Spring European Council, Brussels, 21 January 2004
- European Regions Airline Association (era): “Slot allocation – the era perspective”, 25 June 2007
- ERA (European Regions Airline Association) response to European Commission consultation on the application of council regulation (EEC) 793/2004 on common rules for the allocation of slots at community airports.
- European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), Potsdam, May 1999
- European Union – Committee of the Regions: “Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S 2001 TRANSPORT WHITE PAPER”, 68th Plenary Session, 13 and 14 February 2007 (COTER-IV-004)
- Interessengemeinschaft deutscher Regionalflughäfen: „Erhalt und Ausbau einer bedarfsgerechten Infrastruktur an regionalen Verkehrsflughäfen und



EU INTERREG III C Programme

The EUROPLANE Project



European Union Region's Operational Project Leading
to Air Transport Networking and Information Exchange

North East South West
INTERREG III C

Supported by the
European Union

Verkehrslandeplätzen“ (Association of German Regional Airports:
“Preservation and Expansion of an Appropriate Regional Airport
Infrastructure”), 2007

- Klophaus, Prof. Dr. R.: “Volkswirtschaftliche Bedeutung von
Regionalflughäfen und Verkehrslandeplätzen“ (“Economic Impact of
Regional Airports and Airfields”), Birkenfeld, 2006
- Regulation (EC) No 793/2004 of the European Parliament and of the
Council of 21st April 2004

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Annex 3 – Overview of participating entities

Lead Partner	<p>Brandenburg Ministry for Economics Heinrich-Mann-Allee 107 14460 Potsdam Germany</p> <p>Contact persons Dr. Carsten Enneper, Mr. Holger Schandert</p>
2	<p>Province of West-Vlaanderen / Ostend Airport Provinciehuis Boeverbos, Koning Loepold III – laan 41 8200 Sint-Andries (Brugge) Belgium</p> <p>Contact person Mr. Alexander Demon</p>
3	<p>Airport Rostock-Laage Parkstrasse 105 18299 Weitendorf Germany</p> <p>Contact Person Mrs. Maria Muller</p>
4	<p>Barnim County / Eberswalde-Finow Airfield Am Markt 1 16225 Eberswalde Germany</p> <p>Contact person Dr. Wilhelm Benfer</p>
5	<p>Aosta Valley Region Deffeyes place, 1 11100 Aosta Italy</p> <p>Contact persons Mr. Antonio Pollano, Mr. Andrea Billotti</p>

6	<p>Marche Region / Ancona Airport Via Tiziano, 44 60125 Ancona Italy</p> <p>Contact person Mr. Paolo Pasquini</p>
7	<p>Liguria Region / Genoa Airport and Albenga Airport Via Fieschi 16121 Genova Italy</p> <p>Contact person Dott. Arch. Francesco Fenaroli</p>
8	<p>SERA South-East Regional Authority / Waterford Airport 1 Gladstone Street Clonmel, Co. Tipperary Ireland</p> <p>Contact persons Mrs. Sheevaun Thompson, Mr. Nicolas Fewer</p>
9	<p>Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Voivodship / Poznan Airport al. Niepodleglosci 18 61-713 Poznan Poland</p> <p>Contact persons Mrs. Joanna Waligóra, Mr. Grzegorz Bykowski</p>
10	<p>Ljungbyhed Airport Thulinvägen 5A 260 70 Ljungbyhed Sweden</p> <p>Contact person Mr. Hans Göran Dahl</p>
11	<p>Kaunas County Governor's Administration Sapiegos Str.10 44501 Kaunas Lithuania</p> <p>Contact persons Mr. Arunas Karlonas, Mrs. Vilma Zasimauskiene</p>