

# Exchange

Newsletter for Aviation Campaigners across Europe

No 15

September 2014

## WELCOME TO AIRPORTWATCH EUROPE



AirportWatch Europe is a network of aviation and airport activists from across Europe concerned about the expansion of aviation. The idea for the network emerged at the conference held in June last year in Attaching, near Munich.

AirportWatch Europe is not an organisation. It is a network which brings together groups and individuals fighting the unsustainable growth of aviation. We are not opposed to flying but we want to see a more sensible approach to aviation that takes full account of the interests of communities under the flight paths and of the planet.

We work with other lobby groups such as Taming Aviation - [www.tamingaviation.eu/](http://www.tamingaviation.eu/), UECNA - [www.uecna.eu/](http://www.uecna.eu/) and Transport and Environment (T &E) - [www.transportenvironment.org/](http://www.transportenvironment.org/)

AirportWatch Europe is your chance to tell other activists across Europe about your campaigns. You can do this by sending us articles, pictures or videos for the website or to be published in *Exchange*. Feel free to send them in your own language or in bad English! We can get them translated or improve the English.

Check out the website <http://www.airportwatcheurope.com/>. It is updated regularly with the latest news. Join our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/AirportWatch-Europe/1444032905848045> and follow us on Twitter [@AirportWatchEU](https://twitter.com/AirportWatchEU)

Read in this issue:

A famous victory in **Geneva**



**STOP**  
COINTRIN  
SANS  
LIMITE

The fight against two possible new runways in **Venice**

Updates from **Nantes, Germany & London...**and much more

**And in November the Taming Aviation Petition will be launched at the European Parliament**

# TIME TO TAME AVIATION

Taming Aviation will be launching its petition in the European Parliament in November. It will be handed in to the chair of the Petitions Committee. Its two main demands are the end of subsidies to the aviation industry, such as tax-free fuel, and an end to night flights. It is working alongside T&E, the Brussels-based lobby group, to organize its launch. There will be representatives from a number of European countries at the launch. If you would like to come, email [johnstewart2@btconnect.com](mailto:johnstewart2@btconnect.com).

Taming Aviation is hoping that the launch of the petition will be the first step to persuade the European Union to end tax subsidies to aviation. Over the next two years the EU will be revising the VAT Directive and the Energy Directive (which deals with tax on aviation fuel). It will therefore be a good time to campaign for an end to the subsidies.



Over 100 citizens' groups from across Europe have joined Taming Aviation. During 2014 and 2015 Taming Aviation will be inviting environmental groups to join to create a European grassroots movement calling for change.

**To join Taming Aviation, go to <http://www.tamingaviation.eu/>**



## 20,000+ at Nantes

The rain did not stop over 20,000 people attending the protest weekend against proposed new Nantes Airport in July. Groups of people had marched from right across France to be at the annual protest. The campaign against the new airport has become one of the most famous in France. AirportWatch Europe had a stall at the event, with campaigners from Brussels, London and Frankfurt. And the direct action group Plane Stupid Rhein-Main proudly flew its flag.



## Estuary Airport Plan Dropped in UK

The proposal to build a new airport in the sea off the coast of the South East of England has been dropped. The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, was keen on the idea but the Airports Commission, which is looking at proposals for expansion in Britain, said it would be too expensive. The Commission was also worried that it would mean the closure of Heathrow: 76,000 people work at Heathrow. In the summer of next year the Commission will submit its ideas to the Government about where it thinks a new runway should be built.

# VENICE: PLANS TO DOUBLE THE SIZE OF MARCO POLO AIRPORT

## Big business interests put before local people and the environment

### Cesare Rossi writes:

The Italian government headed by Matteo Renzi is about to approve the National Airports Plan prepared by the airport management companies and three economic research and consultancy organisations.

The Plan includes the master plan of Venice airport that proposes third and fourth runways, hotels, restaurants, shops, giant parking areas for planes and cars, highway and metro access and lots more. The new airport should be ready in 2030 but preparatory work has already begun



The airport management company, which also manages the airports of Treviso and Verona, has a target of 15 million passengers per year by 2030 (currently 9 million), involving 160,000 aircraft movements/year (currently 84,000). The master plan is backed by lobby groups to whom it will bring great profits (airport and affiliated companies that will manage the new parking, restaurants, hotels ...).

It will be catastrophic for the environment: 30 hectares of land will be sealed with cement and asphalt, 2 km from the Park of the Northern Lagoon of Venice which includes the islands of Torcello, Burano, San Francesco del Deserto, Sant'Erasmus and the shores of Cavallino/Treporti. Properties will be expropriated and 20,000 people living in the area of the planned runways will be exposed to airport emissions and noise. These people will see 80-100 planes fly over their heads every day at heights of only 200-300 m.

**The plan includes proposals for a 3rd and 4th runway. 20,000 people will be exposed to high levels of noise and pollution**

Unfortunately these people have been kept in the dark about airport plans. The airport company has always played down the master plan, calling it a hypothetical project, unlikely to be built. Local government seems to have preferred to be deceived and has not opposed the idea of unlimited airport growth. Some time ago, some green organisations condemned the project and its consequences, but no action followed.

A small group of people living near the airport, who already live with unbearable levels of noise and pollution, are trying to organise meetings to inform and raise awareness in their fellow citizens, future airport victims, in order to mobilise against actuation of the master plan.

Our opponents are powerful and sustained by local speculators, but we are determined to do what we can, hopefully with help and advice from campaigners in other countries.

**Cesare Rossi**

*Citizens of Tessera, Ca'Noghera and Campalto against Acoustic, Atmospheric and Environmental Pollution from Air Traffic*

# VICTORY IN GENEVA...BUT THE FIGHT GOES ON

**Campaigners in Geneva have scored a major victory against the airport's expansion plans. It is the first time that they have won. And it has made them confident that they can also defeat future expansion plans. François Périllon reports.....**



Look at a map: Geneva Airport is only 150 km from Lyon Airport. If there were no international institutions in Geneva and the surrounding area, there would be no reason to have an international airport between Zurich, Basel and Lyon.

EasyJet is the main user of the airport, accounting for 44% of the traffic. Most of the passengers using it are people going for week-ends to London, Barcelona or Rome. It does not help the local economy that so many people leave Geneva each weekend; it simply imposes a heavy environmental cost on the city and its surrounding areas. It is this weekend traffic that has been the drive to expand the airport. Its director Robert Deillon wants to increase the number of passengers from 14 million to 24 million within 10 years.

## **Unexpected opposition to new terminal**

As a first step, the airport wanted to rebuild the old-fashioned terminal and to increase the number of gates at the airport.

A simple project, with simple study (50 pages) and a simple conclusion: traffic will grow, the airport said, but the noise, air pollution and climate pollution won't. Please believe! However, the plan faced strong opposition from residents (ARAG), environmental associations (WWF, the key transport-association ATE and the climate organisation Noé21) and even local government associations. They formed a coalition and stopped the project.

After long and hard negotiations, the Airport modified the initial project. The project will be allowed, but with a strong, legal condition. The key condition is that the expansion will be allowed as long as it doesn't increase the number of planes that are on the airport at any one time.

Opponents did not only stop the project but also won the communication battle: the press highlighted the lack of transparency around airport-related projects, the growing uncertainty of the economic-feasibility of the project and even stressed the problem of sustainability (noise, climate) of air-traffic growth. Moreover, the victory sent out a clear message to all the authorities: local environmentalists, residents and local governments can no longer be ignored.

## **The war is not over**

But the war is not over. Residents and environmentalists are concerned that plans may emerge for a new big north terminal, huge investment for renovation of terminal south.... and a second runway. A Masterplan is being prepared by the federal and local authorities and the associations suspect all this is simply to increase the capacity of the airport. But the opposition is ready for another big fight. Residents are also deeply concerned that the operating hours of the airport may be extended. At present, operation hours run from 00.06h to 22.00h. The local residents' association, ARAG, is suspicious the airport wants 24 hour operations.

## **Traffic management will be the key**

Air traffic is one of the heaviest contributors to climate change. The latest IPCC report stressed that the climate costs of aviation are 3 times as big as previously reported because cirrus and contrails play a huge role; CO2 is only 1/3 of the total climate impact.

## **Rail alternatives**

And alternatives do exist! More than half of the air-traffic from Geneva could potentially be diverted to trains: Paris is within 3 hours in train (1 million people a year travel between Paris and Geneva by plane). London, northern France and even northern Benelux, Spain, Rome and southern Germany are within half-a-day travelling time by train. Only 30% of Geneva Airport's traffic is related to intercontinental or remote destinations. And these destinations are growing far more slowly than the nearby destinations.

We know how to get this shift from air to rail: ending the subsidies to aviation; ensuring aviation pays its true environmental costs; good train timetables; investment in rail-infrastructure instead of airport-infrastructure; and good communication. Time for traffic management has come !

**François Périllon (coordinator, climate-association Noé 21)**

## PROTESTS CONTINUE ACROSS GERMANY



Airport protests continue across Germany. In **Munich** (opposite) eye-catching events are organized against a third runway. At **Frankfurt** campaigners occupy the terminal every Monday evening in protest against the 4th runway. Other protests take place against it across the city. There have also been protests in the woods against a 3rd terminal that is being considered. At **Berlin** the Mayor has resigned because the controversial new airport has still not opened and is way over budget. There are protests against night flights in **Dusseldorf** and **Leipzig**. And **campaigners against aircraft, rail and road noise are**

**linking up with each other.** For more than a century, railroad tracks have cut through the town of Lorchhausen, on the border between the two western German states of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate. Well over 100 trains, many of them freight trains, rumble through the town every day on their journey through the Rhine Valley, between the cities of Koblenz and Wiesbaden. There are about 60 trains a night between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. The victims of railroad noise in the Rhine Valley have teamed up with victims of airport noise in the Frankfurt region, and they are now calling for joint demonstrations in Wiesbaden and Mainz, the respective state capitals of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate.

## Protests against new Flight Paths

There are more and more protests taking place against new flight paths across Europe and North America. Computers can now guide aircraft much more accurately when they land and take off. Most airports are now trying to concentrate flights over a few areas rather than spread them out. This enables the airlines to save fuel and allows more planes to use the airports. But it means many people are now living in 'noise ghettos' and noise has been brought to new areas. Opposite is a



picture of a village near Gatwick Airport in Britain which is being overflowed for the first time because of the flight path changes. And here is a link which shows how communities are suffering in Chicago: since flight paths changed at O'Hare Airport. [http://politics.suntimes.com/article/chicago/ohare-noise-complaints-skyrocket-flight-paths-changed/fri-09052014-227am ...](http://politics.suntimes.com/article/chicago/ohare-noise-complaints-skyrocket-flight-paths-changed/fri-09052014-227am...)

- The next edition of Exchange will have a big feature on flight paths

*Exchange* is compiled by John Stewart - [johnstewart2@btconnect.com](mailto:johnstewart2@btconnect.com) – on behalf of Airportwatch Europe. Check out our website: <http://www.airportwatcheurope.com/>.

