

Exchange

Newsletter for Aviation Campaigners across Europe

No 12

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TIME TO TAME AVIATION



Over 70 citizens' organizations have signed the Taming Aviation petition calling for an end to the subsidies the aviation industry receives and for night flights to be banned. The petition will be presented to the European Parliament in Brussels later this year. At present, the tax privileges the aviation industry gets costs Europe around 50 billion euros each year. There is no tax on airline fuel. VAT (Value Added Tax) is not paid on tickets. And the EU allows around 3 billion euros of state aid to be paid directly to airports and airlines (see page 5 for more details). If all these subsidies were to be removed, passengers would be required to pay more realistic fares when they travel. That would not significantly reduce the number of business people using planes as business travel tends not to be price-sensitive. It would, though, cut leisure trips. This means the demand for aviation in Europe could be stabilized or even reduced.

- For more information <http://www.tamingaviation.eu/>. This excellent website is in several languages. Do encourage as many citizens' groups as possible to sign!

On the next page exciting news of a **new aviation campaigners' network that will be launched very soon. Read on!**

New Aviation Campaigners' Network to be Launched

During the last few years aviation campaigners and activists from across Europe have made contact with each other. The conference in Attaching in June was a good example of this. People came together from many countries. Until now, though, there has been no network bringing everybody together. That will soon change. Very soon a new network will be launched. You will all be invited to become part of it. It will not be yet another organisation! It will be a network which will:

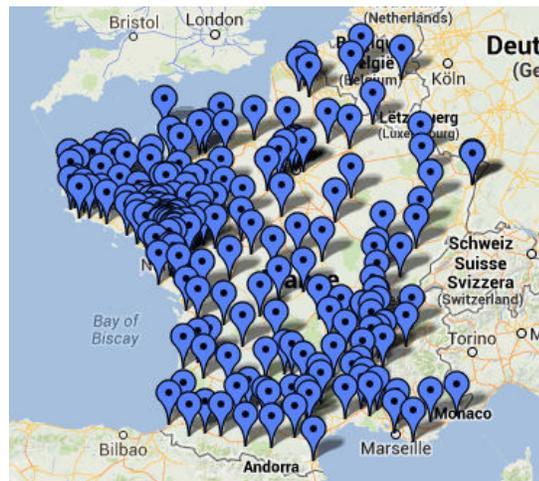
- act as an information exchange for campaigners;
- enable campaigners at different airports to support each other;
- help co-ordinate joint activities, including actions and demonstrations;
- produce booklets and other information material;
- help with lobbying at an EU level.

It will publicise and give practical support to initiatives such as Taming Aviation and the Attaching Manifesto (<http://www.planestupid-germany.de/en/home-en/105-attachinger-manifesto.html>).

- The next edition of *Exchange* will be a special one to mark the launch of the new network. **We are grateful to LUSH for financial support.**

Support Grows for Nantes Campaigners

There are now over 200 support groups backing the campaigners fighting the proposed new airport at Notre-Dames-des-Landes outside Nantes. The campaign suffered a setback when the EU refused to insist the French authorities carry out a full environmental assessment of impact of the new airport. But the French Government has still not signed the papers that would allow the airport to be built. It may be waiting until after local elections in March. But when it does it will face new legal challenges and a mass mobilization across France. The next big demonstration is on 22nd February. See <http://acipa.free.fr/> for details.



Frankfurt Campaigners Feel Betrayed by the Green Party



© BARBARA KLEMM Clashes of airport opponents and police in 1981

The campaigners protesting against the impact of the fourth runway at Frankfurt feel let down by the Green Party in the state of Hesse. At the elections in Germany earlier this year, which saw Angela Merkel's CDU Party (Conservatives) reelected, Hesse defied the national trend. The CDU lost power, largely because of its support for the controversial fourth runway opened by Merkel in 2011. A coalition of the SPD (Socialists), Greens and Die Linke (the Left Party) could have formed the Government but they could not agree a programme. So, the Greens have joined with the CDU. The campaigners argue that the Greens have won very few concessions on the airport from the CDU. The night flight ban will now last one hour longer (until 6am); there could be a cap on day-time flights; and a third terminal may not be built. The Green Party argues that the noise climate would be worse for residents if they had not entered the coalition.

The irony is that Germany's Green Party grew out of the historic protests against the 3rd runway almost 40 years ago

The irony is that it was the historic protest against a third runway in Frankfurt nearly 40 years ago that played a major role in the formation of Germany's successful Green Party. And the ironies don't stop there. On a cold November's day in 1980 Volker Bouffier, then chairman of the CDU's youth wing, the Junge Union, met with some of the 50,000 protesters occupying the woods near the airport. Amongst them was a teacher called Gerhild with her son Tarek. Tarek is now leader of the Hessian Greens which has just gone into coalition with the CDU led by.....Volker Bouffier.



The message couldn't be clearer (left). The Frankfurt campaigners are determined to carry on with their campaign to close the new runway. When it was opened the authorities changed many of the flight paths so that communities – some of them 40 kilometres from the airport – which previously had no noise problem got constant low-flying aircraft.

Munich Campaigners Confident 3rd Runway will not be Built

Campaigners in Munich believe that a third runway will not be built in the foreseeable future. The number of flights using the existing runways is falling and the business community in Munich – Germany’s richest city – is not pressing for a new runway. Indeed, the airport is becoming so desperate to create the market for a new runway that it is trying to tempt businesses to locate close to the airport.

The Conservative Government of Bavaria wants a Bavarian-wide referendum on a third runway. This follows the rejection of the new runway by the people of Munich last year after a first-rate campaign involving local communities, Young Friends of the Earth Bavaria and Plane Stupid Germany. And the Bavarian Green Party!



Berlin’s new airport has still not opened 22 years after it was first planned. The authorities have given up setting an opening date!

<http://www.newstatesman.com/business/2013/09/curious-case-berlins-brandenburg-airport>

Heathrow 3rd Runway Back on the Agenda?



It was the most famous victory of recent years. Campaigners defeated plans for a third runway at Heathrow. The aviation industry was shocked. However, it regrouped and started to put pressure on the Government to think again. As a result, the Prime Minister David Cameron set up the Airports Commission to look at the need for more runways. The Commission

produced its Interim Report in December. It argued that one new runway is needed – at either Heathrow or Gatwick. It does not like the idea of the new offshore airport proposed by the Mayor of London. The Commission will make its final recommendation in summer 2015. But it will only be a recommendation. The Government can accept or reject it. Campaigners believe they can stop a 3rd runway at Heathrow again. The opposition to it remains huge. It includes residents, local authorities, politicians from all the political parties, large environmental organizations like Greenpeace and direct action activists.

SESAR is the Name

It could be most controversial thing of 2014

It is not the name of a new airline or even an obscure airport that Ryanair has started to use! But it could become one of the most controversial things of 2014. It is about changes to airspace and flight paths. SESAR, the Single European Sky Agreement, aims to create much more coordination between the air traffic control systems of individual European countries in order to increase efficiency and cut CO2 emissions. It means that over the next few years all European countries might alter the flight paths to many of their airports. In the UK, air traffic control is already proposing changes at Gatwick and London City airports. The big danger is that local communities will not be consulted about the changes. In order to improve efficiency, air traffic control may be tempted to concentrate flight paths into narrow bands so that all the planes go over a few communities. They will create noise ghettos. They now have the technology to do this. Computer technology such as PR-NAV allows aircraft to be guided much more precisely. It would enable Heathrow planes, for example, to be lined up in the North Sea and fly in two straight, concentrated lines to the airport. That would make life unbearable for the people under these flight paths.

- If you want to be able to track the flight paths in your area, look at www.dfld.de. It is run by the wonderful campaigner Horst Weise. Your airport can also use the system. You can email Horst on mail@DFLD.de

European Commission wants to End State Aid

The European Commission is proposing to end state aid to airports and airlines in ten year's time. At present it is estimated aviation in Europe receives about 3 billion euros a year in state aid. In some very limited circumstances there may be social and equity reasons for state aid to the aviation industry – for example, to support services to remote islands in Greece or to the northern regions of Scandinavia. However, most of it goes to airports and airlines that are already profitable: <http://www.transportenvironment.org/sites/te/files/publications/2013%2009%20state%20aid%20briefing%20final.pdf>

- The Brussels lobby Group T & E (Transport & Environment) is co-ordinating a campaign on state aid. They are keen to hear about airports and airlines in your country which receive state aid. Email Aoife O'Leary – aoife.oleary@transportenvironment.org

A video and book about the power of big business lobbying in Brussels:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJIFxdBD4w>; <http://corporateeurope.org/lobbycracy/2012/03/europe-inc>

Let us have your news

Let us know what is happening at your airports. Send us information about events you are holding or campaigns you are doing. Together we can win! Also, if you would like to join the aviation campaigners' google group, let us know.

Email John Stewart: johnstewart2@btconnect.com