



Executive Committee meeting
March 6 2008
Paper 5

Brussels, xx March 2008

ARC preliminary comments on the Green Paper “Towards a new culture for urban mobility”

Introduction

The Airport Regions Conference (ARC) is an association of regional and local authorities across Europe, which have international airports situated within or near their territory. We are today more than 30 cities and regions hosting “the big five” airports in Europe along with other major and regional international airports in 18 European Countries.

The ARC brings together a wide range of expertise at the interface of air transport and local and regional policies. A common concern is to balance the economic benefits generated by the airports against their environmental impact, notably the effect on the quality of life of local residents.

The ARC members cooperate at European level to pursue common interests. This means that ARC members discuss and formulate positions and other statements that reflect the views of cities and regions on aviation, regional development and environment. Airport Accessibility is one of the key issues for airport regions in Europe.

The ARC has taken the opportunity last year to share some first remarks on the Green Paper with the Committee of the Regions. The ARC would now like to submit its views to the European Commission.

Airport accessibility

Air transport performs many important functions in the modern society. Aviation facilitates economic and cultural exchange and is a significant and irreplaceable source of employment and growth in many regions.

Metropolitan areas are in general the prime destination for business travellers as they are the main location for national and international political and administrative organisations, company headquarters etc. Business travellers provide the basic demand that is necessary for

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developing the metropolitan tourism infrastructure– transport connections, hotels, restaurants, meeting and fair facilities. Thus, good land and aviation transports are crucial for their development of regions.

The ARC has over the last decade been engaged in several studies on the relation between the growth in aviation, airport accessibility and public transport. Two major studies have been published. In 1999, “*Promoting Public Transport in Airport Regions*” and in 2007 “*Airport Accessibility - a territorial approach*”.

In addition to the normal provision of public transportation, the airport regions themselves provide public transportation to some airports. It is a fact that cities and regions having an international airport within or close to its territory have a major challenge in providing public transport to the airports. Major airports in Europe cater for somewhere around 20- 50 million passengers per year. The regional airports have, over the last ten years met an increasing demand for airport accessibility. This expansion is rapidly changing the regional structure of airport accessibility and needs to be addressed in a sustainable way.

The Commission Green Paper has unfortunately neglected reference to the specific situation airport regions have.

Airports are major job creators

Airports are equally a growing pole of job opportunities. An average estimation is that one million passengers create about 1000 jobs directly related to the airport. Many of these jobs are served 24 hours, 7 days a week. This means a great demand for public transport solutions, which is difficult to serve, and has a different profile from public transportation for air passengers. Many service providers find it difficult to deliver suitable solutions to meet this demand.

ARC believes the situation is similar in all airport regions and a joint approach to this issue may provide new and innovative solutions to a common problem. Airport regions believe there is a need for a European approach to new innovative thinking in how to provide sustainable transports to meet both the work force as well as the passengers need in airport regions.

Surface access is a key to meet growing demand.

To enhance European regions’ ability to meet the Lisbon criteria, the demand for more and better air services will grow. The air transport industry is forecasted to more than double in the next 20 years.

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The Commission is concerned about the airport capacity in Europe. Likewise there should be a major concern in the Commission about how cities and regions should be able to address the growing demand for airport accessibility. Improper ground transportation may hamper the efficiencies improvements made in the air and at the airports. This is a concern in many airport regions today. The growth in the air travel implies an increasing demand for improved sustainable transport solutions in airport regions.

A recent ARC study reveals remarkable facts about the volume airports generate in terms of trips. The study indicates that an airport like Gatwick with about 35 million passengers generates as many trips on a daily basis as a city of about 35 000 inhabitants. What is even more remarkable is that the volume in passenger kilometres generated is equivalent to a city of about 350 000 inhabitants. The findings in Gatwick are similar to the figures for Stockholm – Arlanda.

Looking at the European level, these figures indicate that airports are focal points in an urban mobility perspective. In 2006 about 740 million air passengers in EU 27 generated as many surface access trips on a daily basis as the city of Athens. In terms of distance travel this is equivalent to the city of Berlin.

The figures above are merely indicators of an area in urban mobility that has to be addressed. Since airport and surface access is also part of an interregional urban mobility structure it needs new and innovative perspective. It is in this perspective that airport and airlines are important partners.

ARC regions say it is necessary to increase the proportion of passengers choosing collective transport to reduce the carbon footprint.

Traveller demand

Along with the integration of European economy and cooperation between regions in Europe, public transportation should also be regarded in an interregional perspective, not only as an intraregional issue. ARC believes that a better integration of planning and provision of public transportation to airports could meet a growing demand for public transport when visiting a region.

A recent pilot study by West Sussex County Council revealed that different air traveller segments chose different patterns to the London Gatwick Airport. Business travellers demand for airport accessibility differs from the charter travellers. Again, low cost airline passengers have different patterns in surface access modal choice.

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Air passengers demand for airport accessibility and ground transportation are not homogenous and need to be addressed differently. We will in the future need more innovative solutions to meet different demands and to be able to reduce the carbon footprint by better and targeted provision of airport accessibility.

Smart charging systems would be possible in the future for air travel. The ARC members would like to see new innovative ways to integrate ticketing. There should also be simple and similar information systems and signing for public transportation at European airports to promote the choice of public transportation. There are many more innovative proposals to promote multimodal journeys between air, high-speed trains, and other modes of public transportation. The Commission have a unique position in promoting this kind of developments with the Airport Regions in Europe.

Emissions

Aviation accounts for about 2-3 percent of the CO₂ emissions worldwide. The CO₂ emissions from aviation over the last decades have almost doubled. The industry is now clearly engaging in improving the environmental performance. Emissions are an issue at airports, both aircraft generated and those from surface transports at the airports. ARC regions have limited influence over the former.

In case of ground emissions, the ARC proposes to undertake a study to examine the carbon footprint of door-to-door journeys by air and comparatives with use of high-speed train as an alternative to air.

We believe that the door to door perspective will bring a better understanding of where reductions in the CO₂ footprint are best made and complement what is done by the industry itself.

Conclusions

The Commission's Green Paper on a new culture for urban mobility focuses on urban transportation in towns and city centres. Many of the major international and regional airports in Europe are located within or close to urban areas. Airports and airport accessibility in not mentioned as a focal point for urban transports. ARC can provide the Commission an insight to enhancing future solutions for this important part of urban transport.



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The ARC represents an opportunity for the Commission to make contact and cooperate with a range of stakeholders. The ARC has more than 30 members in 18 countries representing cities and regional involved in the development in airport regions and airport accessibility.

ARC networks enables exchange of good practice and working towards establishing common standards. Reconciling economic development with accessibility, quality of life and environment encapsulates the challenges facing ARC member regions in respect of their airports.

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