



**The Airport Regions Conference's
comments on the Commission Staff Working Paper
'Airport Capacity, Efficiency and Safety in Europe'.**

The major benefit of this working paper is that it addresses the inescapable fact that Europe will face a lack of airport capacity. ARC appreciates the analysis of the situation. It raises our awareness in that airport regions in Europe have to address the lack of capacity today in order to create additional capacity for the future. Planning procedures take time - not less than 10 years, most often 20 years. Hence, planning for additional capacity has to start today. It is also clear from the paper that airport planning has a European dimension.

However, planning for more capacity falls under in the competence and responsibility of planning authorities in the regions and the member states. Planning methods vary due to various planning traditions and legislative frameworks in European countries and must be respected. There is no EU competence to interfere with this national competence.

Based on a dialogue with ARC members all over Europe, the ARC would like to forward the following ideas on the subject of creating more airport capacity.

A first step towards additional capacity in the short term is to promote better use of existing capacity through:

a) More efficiency in start and landing procedures.

Better use of take off and landing techniques and procedures should first and foremost result in a reduction of noise emission in the neighbouring areas. A positive reduction of the level of noise emission may open up for additional flights and better use of existing capacity.

b) Better use of ground transport systems.

Increased capacity in the air means that adequate transport on the ground has to be in place. However, ground transport often suffers from congestion. Therefore, measures like the promotion of integrated ticketing for air transport and ground transport may increase the use of public transport systems and lead to less congestion and increase capacity for ground transportation.



c) Development of an integrated use of airport capacity in a region, an airport system. This may very well be feasible in certain regions through a well integrated public transport and transfer system.

Secondly, the spread of demand in Europe should be analysed. This analysis needs to take the following points into account:

a) Where will there be lack of capacity and why?

b) For many regions it is of major importance that people should be able to travel there and back in one day to their important political, financial and research centres, regardless of the mode of transport.

c) Analysis of alternative means of transport for short haul distances (less than 600 kms?). The ARC believes that a dense network of HST could for example relieve pressure on the demand for capacity in a long-term perspective.

d) The need for a multimodal approach.

Integrating air transport with other transport modes could lead to a better use of capacity, diminish pressure on capacity and free up slots for long haul flights (over 600 kms?).

Thirdly, we need to recognize that environmental standards have to be respected and be regarded as limiting factors for the creation of new capacity.

a) Especially noise and emissions thresholds are limiting factors for new capacity.

b) Also the quality of life of citizens living around major airports must not be jeopardised. In the eyes of citizens, exceeding the thresholds and jeopardising their quality of life could very well outweigh the benefits of having a major international airport in their region. This could endanger further growth.

Fourthly, future trends in aviation business models should be seriously taken into account. Business models other than traditional models should be considered in discussions on capacity in Europe. The following questions arise in this context:

a) Will the hub and spoke system prevail as the dominant business model? The use of super aircrafts like the A380 will rely on hubs fed by other airports.

b) Will the polycentric model continue to grow and meet the growing demand through the settlement of more medium-sized bases in Europe? The trend set by low cost carriers is likely to continue. This could lead to a more flexible use of capacity.



c) Will there be an alternative business strategy for intra-European point to point flights? For example, smaller aircraft with less passenger capacity but with a longer range than before are being developed now. There are forecasts that this kind of equipment will be used increasingly. This development could have important effects on the demand for capacity and the spread of destinations. It will also increase the demand for rapid ground transport between the airports and the conurbations.

Fifthly, an analysis of different customer segments is equally important. What trends are we able to foresee in tourism industry?

a) Roughly 40 percent of tourism travel goes by air today. What will be the trend inside Europe? What will be the trend into Europe? When, where and how will the Asian market constitute a substantial tourism stream into Europe?

b) What are the requirements when the business community increasingly demands travel there and back in one day? Development of this possibility will meet the aims of the Lisbon Strategy to promote knowledge-based economies in more remote regions in Europe.

c) When the economy becomes globalised, dedicated air freight will continue to grow. This could translate into more night flights. Where is capacity for air freight to be found - in major airports or in dedicated freight airports?

The above questions are fundamental for planning authorities. The answers are needed to be able to respond adequately to demand questions in airport regions. They are also needed for a broader understanding of public opinion. Awareness of these questions needs to be raised among planners and politicians in regions. Furthermore, possible analyses should not only be done on a general level. Specific variations for different kinds of airport region should be taken into account.

Furthermore, it is time to define the major stakeholders in the process of capacity creation in order to assure the quality of the process.

a) All aspects mentioned above indicate the major role and responsibility that planning authorities within airport regions have to face. It goes further than that, as planning is an obligation and a mandate given by national law. Public authorities have the responsibility to ensure a high quality of life, safety for their citizens and a responsibility for the environmental situation on their territory. This is why airport regions also have a major role in securing economic development and competitiveness in Europe.



b) It is important that airport owners approach planning with a holistic perspective and integrate airside planning and landside planning.

c) Mediation practices have to be further developed and explored, as well as measures to mitigate nuisance from air transport and land transport. In June the ARC will organise a conference on Mediation in Vienna, with examples from three continents.

d) A balance between different modes of transport and a multimodal vision for Europe is needed. This should be supported by the European institutions.

For further discussion of the issue of capacity in Europe, the ARC would welcome an initiative from the Commission for a high level forum with relevant stakeholders. In this forum business, academia and planning authorities could share their view on capacity constraints.