



## Rewarding ARC dialogue in Brussels with EU Members of Parliament

**The important role of airport regions in Europe was in focus at a fruitful dialogue meeting between Members of the EU Parliament and political representatives from Airport Regions Conference (ARC) in Brussels 18 November.**

**- We need aviation, but how can we reach the goal of a carbon neutral aviation sector? said MEP Gesine Meissner from Germany.**

Ms Meissner, representing the Transport and Tourism Committee and coordinator of the ALDE group, also stated that the work of ARC in concentrating on the quality of life for people in airport regions is the right way to go for the future.

Anne Devitt, ARC President, presented the role of airport regions in exploiting and optimising the economic growth of the airports. Airports are centers for economic development but at the same time inbedded in areas where there are communities and people. This is why it's important for the airport regions and the aviation industry to work together to balance the benefits of having an international airport with the negative effects in terms of noise, air quality and sometimes congestions in the airport regions.

Ms Devitt expressed the need of establishing closer links with the European Parliament and its Committees on issues related to aviation, regional development and environment.

- Decisions on the European level have a direct impact on the local and regional level in airport regions. Strengthening the relations between the airports communities and European political representatives would be an important step in providing long lasting conditions for policy making at all levels. There is no strength until we come together and learn from each other, said Ms Devitt.

She also described ARC as a recognised stakeholder in Europe representing the views of cities and regions in aviation and regional development. ARC was formed in 1994 and has today more than 30 cities and regions from 19 countries, representing cities and regions that host an international airport or have one in their vicinity.

- Development in aviation and airports has a major influence on regional development. Aviation is of growing importance for European regions in terms of long term international competitiveness and bringing European regions closer together, said Anne Devitt.



ARC Executive Committee Member Heiko Kassekert, Frankfurt, described the project work of QLAIR – quality of life in airport regions with the objective to highlight the future of airport and aviation developments in conjunction with a sustainable future for the surrounding areas. The aim of the QLAIR network is to improve the quality of life of inhabitants living nearby an airport.

Pieter Deschamps, project manager of the Surface Access and Climate Change group, informed of the fact that transport to and from the airport stands for more than 50 percent of the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in relation to aviation. This is why it's important to have a door to door perspective when you look at emissions. The SACC group therefore aims at finding measures to decrease these emissions i.e. by developing a model airport for measuring data around emissions in the same way.

ARC General Secretary Bengt Christensson presented the work of the ARC Mediation Competence Center in Vienna, aiming to create a toolbox for participative planning and airport mediation process. A database is being formed for sharing and providing information around this area.

Bengt Christensson also described the work of AIREA – an e-learning academy for interactive learning. AIREA strives to find new ways of offering vocational training for airport-related professions throughout Europe through establishing priority needs for airport regions in regards to vocational training.

- Airport-related jobs without career opportunities are regarded as not attractive. This is why we want to pick the best courses in Europe and make them available in airport regions through this e-learning platform, said Mr Christensson.

*Gunnel Rydberg*