EASA spreads its wings: Reaching out to Europe’s airports

An interview with Patrick Ky, Executive Director, European Aviation Safety Agency

UK airports focus
Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heathrow, Liverpool, London City, and Stansted profiled

The Airline Conversation
With Kenny Jacobs, Chief Marketing Officer, Ryanair

Helsinki Airport
The gateway bridging the world
Welcome to the heart of Europe: It is here that Western and Eastern Europe shake hands. That’s why Vienna Airport is both the starting point and meeting point for millions of potential passengers from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria. This unique catchment area offers limitless possibilities and promising growth. We open the door to your success.
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ARNAUD FEIST, PRESIDENT OF ACI EUROPE

Editorial: Punching above our weight

AIRPORTS IN THE NEWS

A snapshot of stories from around Europe

PATRICK KY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EUROPEAN AVIATION SAFETY AGENCY

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AIRPORT COMMERCIAL & RETAIL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

Challenging the traditional business model

REGIONAL AIRPORTS’ CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

Bringing the Regional airports to Reykjavik

AIRPORT PEOPLE

Alan Borg, CEO Malta International Airport

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10 million passengers growth

10 new long-haul routes

13.5 million seats

765,000 tons cargo

Destinations:
20 New
BGI | BGY | BKK | CLJ | CPH
CUN | DXB | FDO | FMM | HKG
LRT | LYS | MLB | OPO | POP
PUJ | SOF | VLC | VRA | WMI

Airlines:
28
Atlasglobal Airlines
Chalair Aviation
Eurowings
Intersky

German airport growth

THE CGN
GROWTH 2015

BEST REGIONAL AIRPORT EUROPE
NEW GATEWAY OF MADINAH

The new terminal of Madinah Airport provides a comfortable start to Hajj and Umrah experience for pilgrims with its smooth operations and perfectionist service approach. Fly direct to Madinah Airport and offer your passengers a memorable start to their pilgrimage.
As I prepare to step down from my role as President of ACI EUROPE, I am looking back at these past two years with the knowledge that our association has continued to deliver significant value to its members. This value comes primarily from the fact that ACI EUROPE is firmly established at the heart of the European policy and regulatory debates on aviation – and more generally transport.

Building such a strong position in Brussels is not something that happens overnight. It is the result of years of hard work from our team, to render the airport voice stronger and more authoritative. Given the immense visibility enjoyed by some other actors of the air transport supply chain – in particular airlines – this is no small achievement. It also owes to the legacy of my predecessors, who have guided our association to where it now stands. In many ways, I believe that ACI EUROPE is reflective of how trade associations have changed over the past 10 years. From being mainly a forum for networking – with a distinct ‘club’ feeling – successful associations have evolved towards professional advocacy and become focused on delivering tangible business value for their members.

There is no shortage of examples of our recent achievements in promoting the interests of our members – from aviation security and safety regulations to State aid rules, ground handling and aviation noise. But ACI EUROPE is not just reacting to legislative proposals. We actually strive to shape the wider policy agenda – be it through our extensive work in analysing air connectivity or showcasing the reality of airport competition and the economic value of aviation. In doing so, we provide key strategic input to regulators, helping them to stay up to speed with a fast changing industry – in which the rear view has become virtually irrelevant.

I think it is fair to say that ACI EUROPE never stands still and that the scope of our work and expertise has expanded significantly. We now cover almost all areas of airport management and development – providing our members with benchmarking opportunities, industry standards and best practices, as well as thought leadership. We have also leveraged our cooperation with ACI WORLD and the other ACI Regions, contributing to the global outreach of ACI.

With more than 460 airports across 45 countries, our membership is now at record levels. This is surely one of the key indicators that we deliver value for our members – and that more than ever we stand as THE voice for Europe’s airports.

So where do we go from here? Like the airports we represent, there are challenges aplenty for ACI EUROPE. In approving a new Strategic Plan for the next five years, the focus of the Board has been on consolidating our achievements and future-proofing our organisation. With the presentation of this new Strategic Plan in Prague at our Annual Assembly this June, I will pass the baton to my successor – fully confident that ACI EUROPE will keep punching above its weight.
Airports in the news

Ensure that ACI EUROPE is up to speed with the latest news concerning your airport by contacting us via communique@aci-europe.org or via our Twitter feed @ACI_EUROPE

Örnsköldsvik Airport

Number of seats available this week from the airport has increased 29% versus last year.

Remote tower services at Örnsköldsvik Airport started on 21 April. Sweden’s air navigation service provider LFV has become the first in the world to launch remotely operated air traffic management. Take-offs and landings at the regional airport were controlled from a remote tower centre in Sundsvall, Sweden, about 78 miles away.

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol

Has handled over 16m passengers in the first four months of 2015.

Amsterdam Airport Schiphol and Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi have signed a memorandum of understanding to promote cargo business between the two hubs. The two airports will promote business, product development, knowledge sharing, training, performance benchmarking, and regulatory agency cooperation.

Gatwick Airport

If it maintains its current growth profile is on course to break 40m annual passengers in 2015.

London’s Gatwick Airport has become the first airport in the world to introduce paperless ID pass applications. Gatwick will be using MTrust by Human Recognition Systems (HRS), an airport ID pass application vetting and issuance solution that is hosted in the Cloud. The technology will help the airport in reducing pass rejections and waiting times. The technology will also streamline the airport’s ID centre operations to increase security and enhance its services.

Aena

In the first four months of 2015, Spain’s biggest 33 airports have grown by 5.3%.

Aena is implementing a pilot project at Madrid-Barajas Airport and Barcelona-El Prat Airport that allows passengers to get real-time information on flights, transition times, commercial offers and other services through the implementation of iBeacons based on Bluetooth wireless technology. This new pilot project will be gradually expanded to other airports in the Aena network.
Athens International Airport has achieved over 20% growth in each of the first four months of 2015.

Athens International Airport has launched a new project – the ‘TAG Athens’ Project – to promote it as a connecting airport for travellers from the Balkans and Europe, with a final destination in the Asia Pacific and Africa regions. The ‘TAG Athens’ Project – which starts with the collaboration of AIA with Singapore Airlines and Aegean Airlines, yet aspires to expand to similar synergies with other airlines – serves as an invitation to passengers, through the basic message “Athens connects you to the world, TAG Athens as an intermediate point on your route”.

Copenhagen Airport
So far in 2015, the Danish airport is maintaining its status as Scandinavia’s biggest hub.

Copenhagen Airport in Denmark has unveiled a 26ft digital wall to supply passengers waiting in the baggage reclaim area with a diverse range of information about their onward journey. The wall is divided into three sections with touchscreens displaying tourist information and transport information, and a ticket machine for public transport in Denmark and Sweden. There is also the option for a video call with a member of staff from the Copenhagen tourism office.

Ostrava Airport
Number of seats available this week from the airport has increased 30% versus last year.

Ostrava has become the first city in the Czech Republic to gain a dedicated airport rail link with the inauguration of a new connection to Leoš Janáček International Airport on 13 April. The Koruna 533m (US$20.9m) airport extension was 85% funded by the European Union.

Nice Côte d’Azur Airport
Continues to make progress towards breaking the 12m annual passenger barrier.

Nice Côte d’Azur’s free mobile app, Nice Airport, has recently undergone a complete redesign. The new, simplified design facilitates fuss-free browsing for users looking for information before, during and after their visit to the airport. The app is available on Android and iPhone, in both French and English.

Naples Airport
So far in 2015 has grown by 7.1%.

On 22 April, GESAC, the airport operator of Naples Airport, and ENAV, the Italian company that provides Air Traffic Control services, signed a memorandum of understanding to implement the A-CDM (Airport Collaborative Decision Making) programme. Naples Airport is expected to fully implement A-CDM by 2016.

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Compiled by Inês Rebelo.
For every stakeholder in the air transport journey, the passenger is at the centre of our industry. It is the ambition of each airport, airline, Civil Aviation Authority and regulatory body to deliver an exceptional experience from departure to arrival – to strive for the satisfaction, the smooth and streamlined processing and, most crucially, the safety of every traveller that takes off and touches down at our gateways.

For Patrick Ky, ensuring the safety and security of every traveller that passes through the European air transport system has become a calling. It is the concern that keeps him awake at night and a crusade to which he has dedicated his professional and personal pursuit. The Executive Director of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) is working to bring about real change within the infrastructure of the industry, to ensure that European aviation is the safest that it can be.

Ky became EASA’s Executive Director in September 2013 and since his appointment has faced some onerous challenges. He has stepped into the role at a time when – despite the fact that worldwide aviation safety is at its highest, with the rate of accidents compared to the number of flights lower than ever – the passenger perception of flying is not one of great certainty, with high profile tragedies of recent months bringing the safety of travelling by plane into public question. Aviation, meanwhile, is in the midst of great change, and from evolving technologies and advancing standards have sprung forth a fresh set of obstacles and opportunities, which industry stakeholders must now consider how to control.

Ky’s experience of the air transport business has spanned an entire career. Following senior positions in the French Civil Aviation Authority and EUROCONTROL, he headed the SESAR programme – Europe’s ambitious Air Traffic Management modernisation project, there gaining knowledge of the needs of industry that has enabled him to pioneer EASA’s progression. His primary ambition in his present role has been to bring together EASA with air transport stakeholders and Civil Aviation Authorities and, importantly, dispel the impression that EASA is “a powerful but rigid administrative organisation”, building relationships free of the tensions and resistance that once stood between the organisation and the industry. “We have started to simplify the way in which we regulate the industry,” Ky said. “It’s going to take time, but I think we are making very good progress. In EASA we are a people who are passionate about aviation, so for us to be perceived as bureaucrats and administrative tyrants – this is not what we are at all. My main objective was to change this image of EASA as this big administrative organisation, to be closer to our partners and ensure that we have the highest levels of safety for aviation in Europe.”

It is Ky’s vision that the stakeholders in the passenger journey will work together to overcome the challenges that the developing industry will bring, to enhance the level of service and safety, to come as close as possible to eliminating devastating incidents like those of the recent past, and to restore travellers’ faith in air travel. “We need to work to make sure that we do not have the catastrophic accidents that we have seen in recent months. It may never be possible to guarantee that there will be no accidents, but we should certainly be aiming for this,” Ky furthered. “And that means that for each incident that happens, no matter how significant, we have a thorough analysis of what happened. Is it due to the aircraft? Is it due to the pilot? Is it due to the weather? Is it due to the airport? Then, every time we try to correct what went wrong. Every time.”

EASA spreads its wings: Reaching out to Europe’s airports

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) is embracing its new, wider scope, with an inclusive approach that reaches out to all stakeholders. Executive Director Patrick Ky took some time out of the recent EASA-FAA International Aviation Safety Conference for a walk in the Botanical Garden of Brussels, to explain the renewed EASA vision to Amy Hanna.
What airports need to know

Ky joined EASA at an important time, as the Agency was finalising the new Aerodrome Regulations which will see Europe’s airports transition from their current licences to comply with the EASA Certificate in new legislation that reflects the state of the modern industry, and the need for a universal safety management system. The introduction of these directives marked the first time that EASA has regulated in the airport domain. “At the end of the day, what matters in aviation is the passenger,” Ky established. “And airports, like airlines, are really the ones who, for passengers, are the face of aviation. It’s extremely important that we work together with airlines and airports in order to bring passengers the level and quality of service that they are expecting from aviation.”

The introduction of the Aerodrome Regulations was initially met with some opposition from a number of Europe’s gateways – much as EASA’s earlier activities faced resistance from CAAs – and most frequently in reaction to the anticipated need for investment to meet the regulation criteria. “But actually,” Ky explained, “in our regulations we are simply enforcing the global ICAO standards, and those airports were just not in compliance with those, which I don’t think is right.”

“At the end of the day, those airports were not doing what they should be – and the Civil Aviation Authorities have not done their work in enforcing that. And we understand this of course – it’s because of local pressures. If an airport in a small city has to make an investment this has an impact on the economy of the city itself, and therefore there is pressure in parliament and so on and so forth. But our problem is the safety of passengers.”

In the time since the regulations’ announcement, support from the airport industry has strengthened, and Europe’s gateways are largely now acting in advocacy of the region-wide ruling. “We are talking about levelling the playing field,” Ky added. “We are not imposing anything just for the pleasure of imposing it. These are ICAO standards. It’s the same rule for everybody, and we think that makes sense.”

**Ky change**

“When we talk about Europe regulating airports we know that there are very strong reactions against it – those who say that an airport is a local organisation, why should it be governed by European rules? But aviation is international,” Ky stated. “In Europe 65-70% of flights cross at least one boundary, which means that to have some airports with specific rules and others with different rules just doesn’t make any sense – that is not a level playing field.” Ky aspires to see every airport in Europe, and beyond, work in harmony with the dozens of gateways to which it is directly and indirectly connected, so that together they may operate in the safest possible way. In order to achieve this, despite the smoothing friction between EASA and the authorities of its Member States, the organisation remains cautious about not being too prescriptive in its rulings, creating a flexible environment in which Civil Aviation Authorities can interpret regulations in a manner that best enables local implementation of the rules.

“Because airports are so inherently ‘local’, there are things that we don’t know – and that we don’t really need to know – at a European level, but we did need to build in flexibility to take into account those very local constraints,” Ky stated. “Now, however, while we are starting to see some countries really make the best of those flexibility clauses, other countries are overplaying their role and are imposing on the airports more constraints than those which we had thought about.” Among the new, and often unprecedented challenges that EASA has faced on entering this new domain is creating a standard that can be implemented by each of its 32 Member States (the 28 EU nations, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) – 32 very different cultures and varied legal climates which EASA must co-ordinate in harmony. “Flexibility for a German civil servant for example might mean something completely different to flexibility for an Italian civil servant, and so I think it’s quite normal that we are, in this very new relationship, learning by doing,” Ky established. “And in all the places where there are differences in the interpretation of the implementation of the
rules, all this will harmonise itself, and a balance will be found eventually. That is the nature of the game.”

One vision

Ky explained that, where airports are concerned, EASA is at the start of a “long and important story”, over the course of which it will work to build its interest in an increasing number of aspects of their operation. “Everything is connected,” he said. “You cannot work with an airport without also talking about Air Traffic Management. And when you talk about Air Traffic Management it has an impact on airline operations, and when you talk about airlines operations you talk about the operator of the aircraft. It just makes sense to have one authority looking at all the different domains.”

EASA is reaching out to the industry, and now works in close coordination with ACI EUROPE, the only organisation with which EASA has so solid a partnership. In 2013, ACI EUROPE and EASA held a series of joint workshops as a forum to discuss the Aerodrome Rulemaking Process, and EASA has continued to engage with airports in the ongoing development of its aviation strategy. In the first quarter of this year EASA published Vision 2020, its proposals for the future of the aviation regulatory system. These proposals, presented as an ‘EASA Opinion’, are the outcome of a comprehensive consultation with stakeholders which started in September 2014. “The first guiding principle of this Opinion is that EASA cannot work alone. EASA, its Member States and their national authorities are part of the same system – and we really need to have that as the philosophy of the system,” Ky enthused. “That means that when you have a fault in one of the national authorities you need to find a mechanism to take over. To make sure that as a system, the quality of the service is the same.”

Among the principles outlined in the Opinion is the proposal that when a national authority has a lack of resources or expertise, they should be able to delegate some of their oversight functions to other authorities or to EASA, in order to make sure that no safety risks are overlooked. “I think this is the most important notion in this Opinion,” Ky said, “because when you look at what is needed in order to do this it is very complex. We are talking about a national authority for some reason may not be able to fulfil its tasks, and if that is the case then who’s going to do it? Is it EASA or is it another national authority? Who is going to pay for it? All those questions. And to answer them we need one system, in which we can harmonise the way in which it is operated.”
"My first impression of Antalya was magnificent"
The European Commission is expected to draft a new Basic Regulation for EASA as part of its forthcoming aviation package. Set for completion in November of this year, the new aviation strategy will take into consideration a great number of factors, such as the competitiveness of the European aviation industry and the importance of safety in aviation, and including the recently published EASA Opinion.

**On the horizon**

The European Commission is expected to draft a new Basic Regulation for EASA as part of its forthcoming aviation package. Set for completion in November of this year, the new aviation strategy will take into consideration a great number of factors, such as the competitiveness of the European aviation industry and the importance of safety in aviation, and including the EASA Opinion. At the time of the Opinion’s publishing, Ky stressed its importance as a tool for preparedness as our industry develops into the future. “EASA – that means the Agency and its sister national authorities,” he said, “needs to be prepared for the challenges ahead. With these changes, we will be more proportional, flexible and proactive to increase the level of safety in European aviation.”

These challenges to the industry, he explained, are changing all the time, and for national authorities to keep up with the pace at which innovation is influencing its operation it is becoming increasingly difficult. The proliferation of new technologies for example requires the hiring of appropriate experts; next generation aircraft demands the greater knowledge of pilots; the prevalence of cyber security presents new threats; new entrants to the market need new certification; and until recently unprecedented developments such as civilian drones must also be surmounted. “These are all things on which we need to pool our resources and, crucially, we need to build the mechanism, which is not an easy thing to do, but it is important in enabling us to overcome the challenges ahead,” Ky explained. “My mandate is to protect the European citizens – the citizen at large – and EASA needs to work closely with the service providers to the citizens – the airlines, airports, and national authorities. Only together can we make sure we are delivering the highest level of safety to our passengers.”

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The future of self tagging is here.

eezeetags introduces a new experience in the self service bag drop process. And it all starts with the tags itself. eezeetags are high quality bag tags that have no backing paper to pull away and nothing that sticks to clothes, bags or floors. They only stick to itself and to nothing else. The result? No waste paper at drop off point, no false sticking possible and therefore a much higher self tagging success rate. According to some major airlines that use eezeetags for their bag drop process this ensures a more easy and seamless travel experience and increases the level of satisfaction of the passengers.
Challenging the traditional business model

24th ACI EUROPE Airport Commercial & Retail Conference & Exhibition, Milan, 21-23 April

The ACI EUROPE Airport Commercial & Retail Conference & Exhibition this year headed to Milan. It was a fitting location – the vibrant new commercial environment in Milan Malpensa’s Terminal 1 showcases the best of a city renowned as an icon of fashion and design. The event attracted a record attendance of over 400 key industry stakeholders, representing airports, retailers, brands, and consultants, which spoke volumes about the importance of commercial and retail revenues to Europe’s airports. Global travel retail sales reached US$62.5 billion in 2014 – a 4.3% year-on-year increase – with the airport channel accounting for 58% or US$36.29 billion of that. The European region accounts for 33% of global sales and grew by 2.5% in 2014. The central theme of this year’s event – ‘Challenging the traditional business model’ – permeated each of the conference sessions. There was a consensus that creative concepts, and a tangible sense of theatre and engagement, are essential to challenge the status quo and maximise the potential of all areas of non-aeronautical revenues.

The 25th ACI EUROPE Airport Commercial & Retail Conference & Exhibition takes place in Helsinki, 12-14 April 2016.

Claus Dietrich-Lahrs, CEO & Chairman of the Managing Board, HUGO BOSS, delivered a truly inspirational keynote address entitled ‘HUGO BOSS and its global customer – a 360-degree approach’. He said HUGO BOSS has developed its business nicely in travel retail, with annual revenues of €90 million today – soon to exceed €100 million. Dietrich-Lahrs explained that the company’s ‘Growth Strategy 2020’ is about engaging consumers emotionally; leveraging the brand’s potential in womenswear, shoes and accessories; building omnichannel to drive retail online and offline; and exploiting growth opportunities in underpenetrated markets. He emphasised the importance of an omnichannel approach to guarantee a 360-degree brand experience, both online and offline, to global customers. “Travel retail has to be an integral part of this – the story we tell downtown needs to be reflected and repeated in travel retail. A consistent message across different consumer touchpoints is the most important long-term challenge,” Dietrich-Lahrs explained.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General, ACI EUROPE, presented a detailed briefing on the state of the industry. He said there is “a bright future ahead, with many challenges”. 2014 saw a strong recovery, with 5.4% growth in passenger numbers to a record 1.82 billion in Europe. It is also a less divided Europe – EU traffic grew by 4.9% and non-EU by 7.3% – so the gap is narrowing. “Growth in traffic in 2015 is holding firm – 5% in January-February. This is defying economic conditions and shows the importance of air traffic connectivity in Europe today,” Jankovec commented. “Connectivity is a challenge – last year we released a report that analyses connectivity over a 10-year period.”

Marc Brissac, Head of Commercial Development & Property Operations Department, Aéroport Toulouse-Blagnac, and Chairman, ACI EUROPE Commercial Forum, highlighted two areas that the Commercial Forum is focusing on – business transformation and real estate development. The next meeting of the ACI EUROPE Commercial Forum takes place in Budapest on 7 September, and many members will participate in the Budapest Airport Runway Run on 5 September.

Sarah Branquinho, Business Relations & External Affairs Director, World Duty Free Group, and President ETRC, emphasised the importance of commercial revenues “contributing to connectivity for citizens in Europe and beyond.” Branquinho said: “It’s impossible to not have an impact on the choice of products our members can sell. The effect of regulation is the opposite of the EU’s desired aim – an environment that increases choice to consumers and enables business to grow – it does the opposite.”

airportbusiness.com
Pietro Modiano, Chairman, SEA Aeroporti di Milano, provided details of the €30 million revitalisation of the commercial environment in Milan Malpensa’s Terminal 1. The project was completed ahead of Expo Milano 2015 – the major global event taking place from 1 May to 31 October. “We have tried to emphasise the values of design, luxury, taste and fashion, which are all synonymous with Milan,” Modiano explained. At the heart of the redevelopment are two piazzas dedicated to luxury retail and food & beverage – Piazza del Lusso (Luxury Square) and Piazza del Gusto (Taste Square).

Brian Woodhead, Commercial Director, Heathrow Airport, outlined the retail vision in the new Terminal 2, which centres on four elements – new luxury, digital, customisation, and Best of British. He emphasised the importance of collaboration, “part of the key to our success is how we work with our business partners”, and outlined a number of firsts, including John Lewis' first airport store and Heston Blumenthal’s The Perfectionists’ Café.

Kam Jandu, Chief Commercial Officer, Budapest Airport, explained that the SkyCourt terminal opened in 2011 with all fixed retail and F&B units let. He added that new retail tenders are being issued this year, and the airport is looking for expressions of interest. Jandu also outlined the importance of experimentation. Budapest Airport has, for example, successfully introduced pop-up store concepts in previously underutilised parts of the terminal. “New trends, such as pop-up stores, are low hanging fruit, sometimes generating up to 10 times more income per sqm that fixed units,” he said.

The conference and exhibition were augmented by two spectacular social events. The Welcome Reception took place in the Palazzo delle Stelline Courtyard, with delegates having the opportunity to visit The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci. The Gala Dinner, meanwhile, was held at the sumptuous Palazzo Mezzanotte.

The exhibition was an excellent showcasing platform for industry suppliers, and provided valuable networking opportunities.

Patrick Graf, Senior Vice President Commercial, Flughafen Zürich, and Immediate Past Chairman of the ACI EUROPE Commercial Forum, emphasised the importance of a partnership approach and urged brands to place a strong emphasis on creating an experience in the travel retail environment. “Airports are a window to the world, and are becoming commercial centres,” he said.

Ezio Balarini, Chief Marketing Officer, Autogrill, delivered the keynote address on day two of the conference. He highlighted the F&B leader’s answers to changing customer habits, and Autogrill’s strategy to “promote new consciousness values” and deliver “outstanding new projects” through “best-in-class airport partnerships”.

Jukka Isomäki, Vice President Helsinki Airport Commercial Services, Finavia Corporation, addressed the subject of: How do you make non-spenders spend? His observations included the fact that frequent flyers are an important source of revenue because of their high visiting frequency. Meanwhile, non-spending is likely to be more attitude-driven. “Non-spending behaviour is not strongly linked to a demographic profile or to a particular segment,” said Isomäki.

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Empowering airports to address their carbon emissions

www.airportcarbonaccredited.org
Bringing the Regional airports to Reykjavik

On 18-20 May, Europe’s regional airports gathered in Reykjavik for the 8th ACI EUROPE Regional Airports’ Forum and Conference, kindly hosted by Isavia and Keflavik Airport. With an attendance of over 175 participants from airports, airlines, industry suppliers and institutional stakeholders, this year’s event was devoted to the theme ‘Innovate, Sustain & Compete’ – three challenges that European regional airports have to face in order to keep growing and improving their services. Considering Keflavik Airport’s increasing number of passengers (3.8 million in 2014) and its fast-growing position as a strategic hub in the Atlantic, Reykjavik was, undoubtedly, the perfect location to discuss how regional airports need to innovate, sustain and compete.

The two-day conference represented a good platform for European regional airports to assert their vital role in Europe’s airport industry – particularly in fostering social cohesion and boosting economic development – as well as to call for more aviation liberalisation. On this note, regional airports emphasised that more liberalisation would boost their connectivity and diversify their traffic mix, while at the same time it would generate more and better business for their communities.

The conference was also a fruitful moment for regional airports to network with business partners and find additional innovative solutions to enhance the
quality of their services. A unique event for delegates to network in a more informal way was also organised in the memorable setting of the Blue Lagoon (literally, in the waters of the Lagoon!). This networking opportunity took place right before the Gala Dinner, where delegates dined on the best of Icelandic gastronomy.

Over the two-day conference, a line-up of top industry speakers took the stage to focus the debate on relevant topics to the future of regional airports, including their economic sustainability, the increase in their airport connectivity and air passenger traffic, as well as strategies for route development. From the strategies adopted by Isavia to increase Keflavik Airport’s connectivity to the ways technology is improving the passenger experience and boosting non-aeronautical revenues, the conference provided ample room for exchanging ideas and practices on improving air connectivity and business performance at regional airports.

ACI EUROPE Director General Olivier Jankovec gave a presentation on the state of Europe’s regional airports, underlining that regional airports are now on a traffic recovery path, albeit a slow one due to tough trading conditions, with a traffic growth rate of +5.1% since the beginning of the year. Jankovec also reminded us that “every 10% increase in air connectivity results in +0.5% increase in GDP” but, looking ahead, regional connectivity will also be dependent on how fuel-efficient regional aircraft will be able to be.

The conference was honoured by the presence of Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, the President of Iceland, who gave an inspiring speech on the pivotal contribution of the airport industry to the local and global economies. He made it plain: “The measure of our role in the global economy is defined by the quality of our airports.”

The prelude: Regional Airports’ Forum meeting

Preceding the conference, on 18 May, ACI EUROPE’s Regional Airports’ Forum held its 21st meeting, where it presented and discussed its new Analysis Paper on the Factors Influencing Economic Sustainability of Small Regional Airports, the main results of which were announced by Thomas Langeland, Chair of the Forum and Airport Director, Kristiansand Airport, on the first day of the conference. Amongst the key findings of this Paper, size is considered to be a determining factor of the profitability of regional airports. 66% of airports with less than 5 million passengers are loss-making, with that percentage increasing to 77% for those with less than 1 million passengers. Also, the implementation of cargo-related charges is essential for operational profit and should be taken into consideration once the connectivity increases. Another conclusion is that more outsourcing is associated with better profitability and limited exposure to ground handling operations will help smaller airports avoid loss-making activities.

Stepping down from his two-year term as Chair of ACI EUROPE’s Regional Airports’ Forum, Thomas Langeland has now been succeeded by Alberto Martin Rodriguez, Director, Gran Canaria Airport, as the new Chair of the Forum, and Henri Hansson, Senior Vice President, Finavia, as its Vice-Chair.

See you next year?

With an original video and audience smartphone interactive game on some cultural facts about Lithuania, Lithuanian airports announced that it will host next year’s ACI EUROPE Regional Airports’ Forum and Conference in Vilnius on 11-13 May 2016. It is time to mark the date in your diary!
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Alan Borg was appointed CEO of Malta International Airport in February, becoming the first Maltese to hold the position since the airport was privatised in 2002. Through a variety of roles over the past eight years, he has been a key player in making Malta and the airport better connected. He spoke to Ross Falconer.

Malta International committed to “customer experience excellence”

Alan Borg’s background is in hospitality and this has instilled in him a customer-centric ideology, and a passion for constantly striving to achieve the best visitor experience. He began his career at Malta International Airport eight years ago, initially in airline marketing, before quickly moving on to become Chief Commercial Officer. “During this time, I was also General Manager for the SkyParks Business Centre – a role that meant spearheading the development of this business segment, which was a first for Malta International Airport,” he commented. “This was a strategic move to diversify the airport’s revenues and decrease its dependency on the aviation segment.” This typifies Borg’s progressive approach, which shines through in conversation. He has identified the non-aviation segment as fundamental in diversifying the airport’s revenue streams, and this is being realised through projects like the SkyParks Business Centre, which is now Malta’s most desirable corporate address, housing local headquarters for global brands including Microsoft and Vodafone. Indeed, non-aviation revenues increased by 12% in 2014 and now contribute 30% of overall revenues. It is successes such as this that highlight Borg’s crucial role in the airport’s development in recent years, and which led him to his new position as CEO. “My past experiences across the various facets of the business put me in good stead for this role, and I’m looking forward to the challenges ahead,” he asserted.

The latest passenger figures for May show year-on-year growth of 9.9% and, in fact, over the past three years the airport has hit new records every single month. This is partly a result of its route development success, which has included attracting five new airlines – Finnair, Transaero, Swiss, Aegean, and Jet2.com. “The key to driving this seat capacity growth is by ensuring Malta remains attractive, and all industry stakeholders are working together to make our island an all-year-round destination,” Borg explained. “Our capital Valletta is such an exciting destination in itself – a city full of history, culture, entertainment, and great food. Tourists can fly in for the weekend and never have to leave the heart of the city – it’s the perfect city break.”

Enhancing “product Malta”

Tourism contributes over 25% of Malta’s GDP, meaning it has a significant multiplier effect on its island economy. The airport’s own contribution to the economy is estimated at over 9%, and Borg expressed a feeling of responsibility to
work with all stakeholders to keep improving ‘product Malta’,” he said. “Let’s not forget that we are the first and last impression, so we are dedicated to Malta’s offering.”

There is also a commitment to connectivity and making this Mediterranean island more accessible to more parts of the world. The current focus is on the comparatively untapped markets around Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, including Russia. Borg explained that Malta offers an opportunity for a better climate to these tourists, even during the shoulder months (the beginning and end of peak season), and this is in line with its strategy to reduce seasonality.

Borg also articulated a focus on “excellence at all levels, particularly when it comes to the customer experience”.

Myriad investments are underway, including expansion of the non-Schengen arrivals area, and extension of the security screening area. “Ultimately, our focus is to keep developing our landside master plan to harness the opportunity the south of Malta brings, and see our business cluster flourish through the creation of increased office and retail space, parking facilities, and a hotel,” Borg added.

As our conversation draws to a close, it is clear that he is tireless in his pursuit of further enhancements across the airport’s business. “I am confident about our future in terms of traffic numbers, and we are now in the process of securing capacity for summer 2016. We are also currently investing in innovating to enhance our passenger experience. According to a recent brand perception survey, 95% of Maltese residents are proud of their airport, so I want to make sure we keep improving on this,” Borg concluded.

Alan Borg, CEO Malta International Airport: “We are in a continuous process of boosting our non-aviation revenues by enhancing our product offering. We have just upgraded many of our outlets around the airport, incorporating new and modern retail concepts and striving for an overall improvement in the passenger experience.”

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Edinburgh embracing competition with more routes and €200m investment programme

Three years after its acquisition by Global Infrastructure Partners, Edinburgh Airport is firmly embracing a new era of competition. The airport’s dynamic approach has yielded positive results, with more passengers, more new routes, and an ambitious £150 million (€200m) five-year investment programme. Gordon Dewar, CEO Edinburgh Airport, outlined the developments to Ross Falconer.

Edinburgh Airport is Scotland’s busiest, with more than 40 airlines serving over 100 destinations and 10 million passengers in 2014. The acquisition by Global Infrastructure Partners in 2012 entered the airport into a new era of competition, and its story since then is one of dynamic growth.

Passenger numbers have continued to rise each month in 2015. After enjoying its busiest ever April, with 10.2% growth to over 900,000 passengers, the airport handled over a million passengers in May. There has been strong performance on both domestic and international routes. Several new services have been launched in the past year, including Madrid with Iberia Express, Malaga with Norwegian, and Copenhagen with SAS.

Edinburgh Airport is clearly seeing the benefits of a growing UK economy, with aviation demand inextricably linked to economic performance. London services have helped drive domestic passenger traffic, with Ryanair flying to London Stansted up to four times per day, and Flybe to London City up to six times per day. A strong performance from BA Cityflyer’s London City service, now operating up to 12 times daily, has also boosted recent passenger figures. “London is still by far our biggest market. It’s performing incredibly well,” Gordon Dewar, CEO Edinburgh Airport, commented. “With two new entrants coming in recently – Flybe to London City and Ryanair to London Stansted – passengers have even more options to travel to the capital city of the UK. To put that in context, on a typical weekday we have 52 flights a day to London, and five different airports you can arrive in, so it’s a great choice for our passengers.”

The long-haul route network has also been expanded with the arrival of Etihad in June and the launch of American Airlines’ new service to New York-JFK. Meanwhile, a year after launching services to Doha’s Hamad International Airport, Qatar Airways in May increased to a daily frequency on the route.

Dewar speaks passionately about the opportunities available at Edinburgh, and both he and his team have embraced this new era of competition with a truly tireless approach. It has reaped rewards; while the airport’s core short-haul European market
has continued to grow strongly, the development of its long-haul connectivity is perhaps among its most impressive achievements. In the three years under new ownership, it has grown from one long-haul route – United Airlines to New York-Newark – to seven. “And we’re not finished yet,” Dewar asserted. Securing Etihad services just a year after Qatar Airways’ arrival is, he said, testament to his team demonstrating to both airlines that the market is so strong there is room for them each to operate and grow at Edinburgh.

**New immigration hall open**

The airport’s proactive approach to new route development is mirrored by its commitment to investing in world-class infrastructure. Building on its impressive growth, the airport is undertaking an ambitious £150 million (€200m) five-year development programme. Key elements of this include additional retail in the landside terminal and departure lounge, and improved check-in and immigration facilities.

“It’s going to be a busy five years, and I don’t see it stopping after that,” Dewar enthused. “The latest project is the second immigration hall, which opened on 7 June. That’s the very visible thing that’s happening this year.”

This new £50 million (€70m) investment programme, extending the immigration and baggage reclaim facilities, triples capacity for bigger long-haul aircraft. Long-haul traffic was up almost 90% in 2014, thanks to new routes from Qatar Airways, United Airlines and US Airways, and increased services from Turkish Airlines.

Alongside all of this, 1,000 additional car parking spaces are being introduced this summer, and another 1,000 will be delivered next year. “We have a broad range of projects that are keeping us ahead of the demand curve, and you have to move pretty quickly to do so when you’re growing at about 10%,” Dewar explained.

The plans for additional retail reflect the importance of commercial revenues, which are growing as a proportion of the airport’s overall revenues. The main aim is to provide passengers with more choice. In the coming year, the watches & jewellery category will be introduced for the first time at Edinburgh Airport, while the fashion offer is to be significantly expanded. “We’re also going to keep delivering great food & beverage, and keep aligning the products we offer with the desires of our passengers,” Dewar stated.

New to the F&B offer is Starbucks Evenings. The new Starbucks store opened landside in April, with the Starbucks Evenings offer of hot and cold sharing plates with premium wines and beers, available from 16:00 daily. It is only the second Starbucks Evenings store in the UK. “We are now genuinely a 24/7 airport, so we should have a 24/7 food & beverage offer. Putting it landside makes great sense, because we have people meeting and greeting, taxi operators, and staff coming on and off shift,” Dewar explained. “We wanted to make sure that, no matter what time you’re at the airport, you can have a cup of coffee. You can even have a glass of wine now, and sit and have a bite to eat. I think that just brings home that we are continuing to expand, and aspiring to offer everything our passengers desire.”
Phase 5 Technology provides bag drop innovation

In conversation, it is clear that Dewar has a passion for delivering the best possible passenger experience. This is perhaps most visible in the check-in process. In partnership with Phase 5 Technology, the airport has introduced a multi-airline bag drop facility. The 10 self-service kiosks allow passengers to weigh their baggage and print their own bag tag. It is just one example of Edinburgh Airport’s desire to empower the passenger and put them in control of their journey.

Lawrence Eke, Managing Director, Phase 5 Technology, explained that the company spent five years making its self-service kiosks as easy to use as possible. The process has as few as three steps – weigh, scan, and tag. A large 18-inch screen guides the passenger through the process using large text and animations. The text automatically changes to the preferred language of the passenger using the information in their booking; 31 languages are currently available. “There are no complex multiple-choice questions, and at Edinburgh passengers aren’t required to touch the screen,” Eke commented. “Most passengers complete the process in 30 seconds, with some completing it in under 20 seconds. Our fastest-ever transition was recorded at Edinburgh Airport by a Ryanair passenger completing the process in just 12 seconds!”

Edinburgh Airport was the first in the UK to use web-based software to operate a fully common, shared bag drop facility for passengers. The multi-airline SONIC Bag Drops successfully process thousands of passengers, bags and payments on a daily basis. The common-use area supports three airlines, accessing three different systems, and operated by two different ground handlers. “We believe this is the first multi-airline, multi-handler, multi-DCS, self-service bag drop operation in Europe, and perhaps the world,” Eke noted.

SONIC Bag Drops enable the airport to increase efficiency by making better use of the terminal’s real estate. This is achieved through several features, most significantly self-service and common-use. Self-service allows all units to be available all of the time, and the SONIC Bag Drop kiosks are only 30cm wide, meaning they are space-efficient. “Common-use is a very important factor, and has always been at the heart of our solutions. People flying with easyJet, Flybe, and Ryanair from Edinburgh Airport enjoy a radically improved passenger experience, as they don’t have to queue to drop a bag,” Eke added.

The airport also embraced wearable technology towards the end of 2014, when members of its customer service team trialled Google Glass. While ultimately deciding the technology wasn’t quite for them, it does demonstrate the airport’s propensity to innovate and think outside the box in terms of interacting with passengers, and enhancing their airport experience.

“We’ll try every avenue we can to take queues out, improve the customer offer where we can, improve choice, and improve the efficiency of the airport as a whole,” Dewar explained.

Edinburgh Airport’s major investment programme highlights its commitment to competing energetically on the international stage, and is ensuring its facilities reflect the continuing growth in passenger numbers. The developments pave the way for the anticipated increase in international connectivity, with new routes, increased tourism, more trade and more jobs for people in Edinburgh and beyond.

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Edinburgh Airport factbox

2014 PASSENGER NUMBERS: 10.2 million

2014 PASSENGER TRAFFIC GROWTH: 4%

2015 PASSENGER TRAFFIC GROWTH (YEAR-TO-DATE): 8.7%

KEY AIRLINE CUSTOMERS: easyJet, British Airways, Ryanair, Flybe, KLM

NUMBER OF ROUTES: 110+

TOP 3 DOMESTIC DESTINATIONS: London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London City

TOP 3 INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS: Amsterdam, Dublin, Paris

RATIO OF CARRIERS: 39% full-service / 61% LCC
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Who flies to more destinations than any other Scottish airport?

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The London City Airport strategy is firmly predicated on delivering experiential excellence. Innovation permeates all aspects of the passenger journey, with the latest project being the £16 million (€22m) transformation of the Western Pier. Declan Collier, CEO London City Airport, briefed Ross Falconer on the developments.

London City investing in ‘Smart Airport Experience’ to expedite passenger journey

London City Airport continues to break its own records on a regular basis – very recently it welcomed over 17,000 passengers in a single day – and the growth shows no signs of slowing.

This success is the result of a combination of interlinked factors – business travel is firmly back on the agenda, and there is increasing demand for the connectivity London City provides. Its airline partners are capitalising on this, launching new routes and increasing frequencies on existing services – BA Cityflyer, in particular, has increased the size of its fleet at LCY in recognition of the growth potential.

At the same time, London is moving east – both in terms of businesses relocating to the east of London, particularly in the tech sectors, and also in terms of these businesses’ employees settling in the east of London. “As a direct result, we’re seeing increases in leisure traffic – skiing during the winter, sun and second homes in the summer – and our airlines are happy servicing this market,” Declan Collier, CEO London City Airport, commented. “We saw 3.65 million passengers in 2014 – an 8% increase on 2013, which was itself up 12% on 2012. This year we are confident we’ll pass the four million passenger mark – and it’s highly unlikely we’ll stop there.”

Building on this success, the airport is embarking on a £16 million (€22m) development programme, which promises to transform the departures area. Work has begun to reconfigure the Western Pier, which houses 70% of London City’s departures gates, creating a bright, open plan space with modern seating, electronic boarding gates, workspaces, quiet areas, and charging points. It is a true transformation, with the total area increasing by some 84% to 1,780sqm, making space for new retail and food & beverage outlets, and 600 additional seats. Completion of the project is expected in Q3 2016.

‘Speed and a premier customer experience’

London City was built in 1987 and, aside from some refurbishment and internal remodelling in 2010, is very much the same building it was 28 years ago, but handling millions of passengers rather than thousands.

Collier speaks passionately about the “LCY customer proposition of experience excellence”, and the Western Pier development will be cutting-edge in design, in use of space, and in use of materials. “I think I can safely say that our regular customers won’t recognise the Western Pier once the works are complete. We’re widening it, we’re opening it up, and we’re moving the gate lounges – currently at ground level – up to the level of the rest of the facilities,” Collier explained. “There will be quiet areas, areas suited to working, retail amenity, food and drink provision, and some 600 new seats to cater for our increased passenger numbers. All of
this will be provided without damaging or taking away from our central propositions of speed and a premier customer experience.”

The need for internal refurbishment and reconfiguration has become more pressing since the recent refusal of planning permission for the wider City Airport Development Programme. Work on the Western Pier is being carried out under ‘permitted development’, which means it doesn’t require planning permission. The City Airport Development Programme (CADP) would have seen extensions to the existing terminal building, as well as new aircraft stands, providing capacity for 120,000 flight movements and six million passengers annually. “Unfortunately – and inexplicably – the Mayor of London has directed a refusal of permission for the works and we’re looking at a minimum 12-month delay while we appeal the refusal,” Collier said. “It sends the wrong message about investment in the east of London and London generally, and seemingly disregards the 2,000 employment opportunities that the CADP will create, as well as the £1.5 billion (€2bn) of annual economic impact that an expanded airport will deliver.”

**Future-proofing the airport**

It’s clear that the Western Pier is of great importance to the airport in terms of maintaining its reputation for excellence and quality, and the same can be said of its investment in technology to expedite the passenger journey.

London City certainly has a progressive policy towards innovation. It calls this the ‘Smart Airport Experience’ – the use of new and state-of-the-art technologies to enhance the customer journey through the airport. “We are investing heavily in IT infrastructure currently – infrastructure that will future-proof the airport and ensure that it is built with the capability of incorporating future technologies,” Collier enthused. “As an example, we have already implemented innovative crowd-sensing hardware that provides us with real-time information on journey times, passenger flows and space utilisation.”

This data – a real-world example of the Internet of Things in action – allows the airport to prioritise staffing, make investment and infrastructure decisions, guarantee its journey time promise, and enhance the customer experience through the provision of remote purchasing capability for retail, food & beverage, and at-seat service.

A central goal is to automate as much as possible of the complete passenger journey. Check-in/bag drop kiosks provided by Phase 5 Technology allow for a common-user check-in facility, at which the customer can weigh and tag a piece of baggage, and tender payment for any excess. The machines have reduced check-in times to as little as 55 seconds.

Meanwhile, ‘Gen 2’ security lanes have increased the amount of trays processed per hour by more than 100%. Time spent in security at London City is rarely more than seven minutes, even at peak.

“Passport e-gates were installed in the immigration area in late-2014 – and while these are hardly ground-breaking in terms of technology, the reaction of our customers has been,” Collier added. “When the gates were installed, we were informed that, from experience at other airports, we could expect a maximum of 40% of passengers to use the gates. We currently have the highest utilisation rates in the UK, running at around 70%. International arrivals at LCY, with carry-on bags – from plane to train – are rarely more than five-and-a-half minutes, again, even at peak.”

A record number of travellers used London City in 2014 and the airport is on track for another record this year. The Western Pier project will help facilitate this continuing growth, while maintaining a high quality airport experience with speedy check-in and arrivals, and an unrivalled location so close to central London.

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**LCY factbox**

**2014 PASSENGER NUMBERS:** 3.65 million

**2014 PASSENGER TRAFFIC GROWTH:** 8%

**2015 PASSENGER TRAFFIC FORECAST:** 4.1 million

**KEY AIRLINE CUSTOMERS:** BA, Cityflyer, CityJet, SWISS, Flybe, Lufthansa, Alitalia, Luxair, Blue Islands, SunAir

**NUMBER OF ROUTES:** 45

**TOP 3 DESTINATIONS:** Dublin, Amsterdam, Edinburgh

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The Western Pier transformation, expected to be completed in Q3 2016, will be cutting-edge in design, in use of space, and in use of materials. London City is creating a bright, open plan space with modern seating, electronic boarding gates, workspaces, quiet areas, and charging points.
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Excellence in Innovation
Heathrow Airport experienced its busiest ever year in 2014, handling 73.4 million passengers – a 1.4% year-on-year increase. New routes and additional flights launched to mature and emerging long-haul markets were among the drivers for growth, including Manila, Chengdu, Bogota and Austin, Texas. Air China also consolidated its London operations into Heathrow.

More efficient use of the hub is key in driving up passenger numbers when operating at 98% slot capacity, and by the end of 2014, Heathrow also had more airlines operating 787s than any other airport globally, while the number of airlines operating A380s increased to seven, benefiting from the direct demand to use Heathrow and the hub capabilities for quick transfers.

“We expect to continue to grow and to beat year-on-year records through the use of larger and fuller aircraft, and some new short and long-haul routes, albeit at a slower rate than 2014,” John Holland-Kaye, CEO Heathrow Airport, commented. “However, our scope to do so is limited by our capacity constraint. With a queue of 30 airlines waiting for slots at Heathrow at any one time, demand for routes at Heathrow well outstrips supply.”

The biggest challenge for the airport is continuing to provide outstanding passenger service, operational resilience and meeting demands for additional connectivity as the UK’s largest gateway, while operating at 98% capacity. Holland-Kaye explained that “the biggest opportunity will be the outcome of the government’s decision on airport expansion”. He, naturally, believes that Heathrow’s proposal is best for Britain and added that expansion would give it “the opportunity to operate up to 40 new long-haul routes and overhaul our cargo facilities, doubling the capacity”.

Maximising economic benefits; managing environmental responsibilities

Heathrow is building on its successes by focusing on a number of key operational priorities. In 2014 it opened the Airport Operating Centre (APOC), which brought together people and information in one place, including the airport service partners like the police and Border Force. “We are already seeing an improvement in the way the airport works – keeping passengers, bags and aircraft flowing, and reducing wait time and delay, while improving forward planning and resilience,” Holland-Kaye said. The next phase is to continue to improve the way APOC captures and then uses the operational data and information it gets, to plan ahead and work to a daily plan so that passengers notice an improved experience. “We are closing Terminal 1 on 29 June. The next phase will be to demolish Terminal 1 and extend Terminal 2, and then close Terminal 3. This will provide Britain with a brand new, world-class airport,” Holland-Kaye enthused. “In the short-term, we are improving the passenger experience in Terminal 3. We are expanding the transfer area and adding new passenger facilities in the departure lounge.”

Heathrow’s expansion is being undertaken with a new approach, putting the local community firmly at its heart. In February, it announced a new noise insulation scheme, with the expansion aiming to reduce the impact of noise and treat local people fairly. “In total, we estimate that we would invest over £700 million (€1bn) on the offer, which would see homes in the designated zone closest to the airport with higher levels of noise stand to have the full costs of their noise insulation covered by the airport,” Holland-Kaye explained.

In addition, up to £3,000 (€4,000) in noise insulation would be offered to homes further away from the airport, subject to government policy support and regulatory approval by the CAA. “It’s an offer which goes above and beyond UK policy requirements, builds on Heathrow’s previous proposals and is comparable to those offered by other European hub airports,” Holland-Kaye added.

Indeed, Heathrow believes you don’t have to choose between the passenger and the local resident – it’s possible to do the best for both. That’s why it’s working hard to maximise the economic benefits that Heathrow brings, while carefully managing its environmental responsibilities as it strives to be a good neighbour to its local communities.

“It’s critical to ensure expansion delivers economic growth in a sustainable way and guarantees those most impacted by expansion get the greatest benefits and are treated fairly,” Holland-Kaye concluded.
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Liverpool John Lennon has a clear commitment to further enhancing the airport experience. This is visible not only through the current £1 million (€1.4m) departure lounge improvement works, but also initiatives like its review to better understand the passenger experience. The man leading these developments is Andrew Cornish, CEO Liverpool John Lennon Airport. He spoke to Ross Falconer.

Liverpool John Lennon is among the UK’s major tourist destinations, welcoming 5.6 million visitors each year, and with tourism contributing £3.4 billion (€4.6bn) to the local economy. Its attractions are myriad: the Liverpool Waterfront is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it has the UK’s largest collection of art galleries and museums outside London, and of course it has a world-renowned musical heritage. Rough Guide even ranked it the number three city in the world to visit in 2014.

This tourist appeal is just one reason behind Liverpool John Lennon Airport’s impressive growth. Passenger numbers increased by over 4% in the first four months of this year, driven by new scheduled services including Blue Air to Bucharest and Bacau, and Flybe to Belfast City. There have also been increased load factors on many of the existing easyJet and Ryanair services.

There is scope for further growth – while Liverpool is the UK’s fifth largest city, its airport is the country’s 12th largest, and Andrew Cornish, CEO Liverpool John Lennon Airport, is leading a progressive strategy to maximise that potential. “Our strategy is to increase the connections that the region needs,” he explained. “The Liverpool City Region market is underserved and we want to provide greater choice for passengers not just locally, but further afield too.”

It is a strategy that is reaping rewards. Over the past six months alone, the airport has announced nine new services and four new carriers, and Cornish believes passenger growth may reach 5-6% by the end of the year.

**LIVERPOOL JOHN LENNON AIRPORT**

**2015 PASSENGER NUMBERS: Year-to-date (Jan-May): 1.6 million**

**2015 PASSENGER TRAFFIC GROWTH (JAN-MAY): 5%**

**KEY AIRLINE CUSTOMERS: easyJet, Ryanair, Wizz Air, Flybe, Blue Air**

**NUMBER OF ROUTES: 63**

**TOP 3 DESTINATIONS: Belfast International, Dublin, Barcelona**

**Departure lounge improvements nearing completion**

Improvements to the customer experience are another core element of the Liverpool John Lennon strategy. The latest development is the £1 million (€1.4m) departure lounge improvement works, which are nearing completion.

Among the most noticeable differences for passengers is that the works have opened up more views within the departure lounge over the apron, runway and to the Mersey Estuary. “It has given this part of the lounge a more spacious, light and airy feel,” Cornish said. “The revised look and feel to the much-expanded Kissing Gate Bar & Eatery is also a further noticeable improvement, with the introduction of popular booth seating so that diners can now have a meal while overlooking the airfield.”

Of course, the key challenge associated with developments in a live airport environment is project managing the works so that passengers are not inconvenienced by keeping any noise and disruption to a minimum, while also keeping the retailers and concessionaires happy. Cornish explained that major phases of work that would cause significant disruption take place outside peak times.

Liverpool John Lennon is also currently undertaking a review to better understand the passenger experience, which aspects of their airport journey they enjoy and which need improvement. “This has included participation in the ASQ Survey programme – the world’s leading airport customer satisfaction benchmark programme, developing a customer service training programme for staff across a number of areas of the business, and even establishing a VIP Customer Board, with key regional stakeholders and regular airport users giving us their views on the airport experience and how we can make this even better,” Cornish explained.

These latest improvements demonstrate Liverpool John Lennon’s commitment to further enhancing the customer experience, and the airport’s relaxed, hassle-free ambience.
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Finally fulfilling Stansted’s potential

Andrew Harrison, Managing Director, Stansted Airport, explained to Amy Hanna how, under the ownership of Manchester Airports Group, London’s third busiest airport is at long last able to seize the opportunities its flourishing catchment is offering up.

When Manchester Airports Group (MAG) acquired London Stansted Airport in February 2013, it was the potential of the gateway and its sprawling East London catchment that drew the largest UK-owned operator to London’s third airport. The opportunities presented by the swelling amplitude of the region’s business, the unparalleled advancements in life and technology sciences revitalising the links between London and Cambridge, and the movement of London’s growing populous to the east of the city, were at the time being drastically underserved, with the airport’s route network not meeting the demand of the catchment. “Stansted was punching below its weight, and we could see no logical reason for its going backwards over the last six or seven years prior to our acquisition,” the airport’s Managing Director Andrew Harrison explained to Airport Business. “Once we were able to sit down and have conversations with our existing carriers we could understand how they could grow – profitably for them and profitably for us, meaning we could give our customers what they wanted. And also then start the more long-term task of repositioning Stansted in the minds of airlines who don’t yet operate here – of changing their perception of the airport, which is based on history rather than reality.”

Two years on, and Stansted Airport’s growth has far exceeded the Group’s expectations. Reinforced by the strength of powerful airlines such as Ryanair and easyJet, passenger numbers are at an all time high, with the gateway serving over 20.9 million travellers in the 12 months ending in March, and throughput increasing by 16.3% year-on-year in the first three months of 2015 – making it the fastest growing airport in the UK. Already the simplicity of the airport’s one-terminal infrastructure and ease of accessibility to London provides much opportunity for passengers, and now Harrison’s objective is to build on these strengths under the gateway’s new ownership. Stansted
is now in the middle of an £80 million (£111.4 million) investment programme, which will transform the airport experience for passengers – and change the way that Stansted is perceived.

Stansted seeking long-haul

“Ours is a 24-year-old terminal and, though in many ways state-of-the-art in terms of its design – modular, easy to use, light and bright and all the aspects that Norman Foster first designed – it’s designed and laid out for how people used airports 24 years ago,” Harrison said. “We knew when we started out that the changes we planned would mean some disruption for the people using the airport in the short-term, but it’s been going really well, and we’re on target in terms of our schedule.” The first 10 months of the development saw the relocation of a 22-lane security facility to create the space for Stansted’s new departure lounge which provides 70% more space to relieve congestion, as well as 70% more seats and 50% more catering space.

The airport has now reached the end of Phase two of its terminal transformation, the latest phase of the departure lounge development a contemporary, convenient and stylish space that is home to an exciting new line up of cafés, bars and restaurants. The development of this new and exciting zone has created a real focus point in the passenger journey through the departure lounge and attracted remarkable interest from the food & beverage industry, with over 70 tenders received for the 12 positions available, including many airport firsts and brand new concepts. “We worked with operators to come up with very different ideas,” Harrison stated. “For example, we’ve got celebrity chef James Martin’s first foray into the food & beverage market, Coast to Coast – a new and emerging dining brand, and Starbucks, which for the first time has integrated an alcohol and evening tapas menu into their coffee shop. Ours is one of the busiest Starbucks in the UK – and old favourite that Stansted is known for, but we’ve also tried to add some newness into it, and be a bit more inventive in terms of what we can bring.’

Stansted has now entered the third Phase of its development, which will see the rejuvenation of the old food & beverage area and the implementation of brand new retail facilities. The tendering stage, in which the airport received an overwhelming number of responses, has now been completed, and the planning segment of the third phase continues.

Another important part of the airport’s modernisation project is the £8 million (£11.1 million) rejuvenation of its Satellite One. Part of a wider £260 million (£361.7 million) investment programme, this development will not only make the area sleek, modern and contemporary in style but provide enhanced passenger facilities, and is being driven by the airport’s ambition to attract more passengers, airlines and, importantly, long-haul services. “It’s about upgrading our product so that it’s ready for more scheduled carriers and long-haul carriers,” Harrison clarified. “Over the longer term, our plan is to diversify the range of routes and carriers to an extent, bringing in a broader range – a greater mix. That doesn’t mean dilute what we have, but instead enriching it, providing more choice. At the moment we feel that the catchment area hasn’t been fully served, and until, say, Ryanair begins transatlantic and long-haul connections to the east and west that demand remains unmet. There’s an existing need and it’s getting stronger and stronger as the story between East London and Cambridge gets told more strongly. People are starting to realise just how important to the UK economy this corridor is, therefore it does need those long-haul routes.”

Looking to the future, Harrison explained that demand will dictate the airport’s further growth. The airport has the capacity to more than double its current throughput to around 40-45 million passengers a year within the existing airport boundary and approved environmental limits. Making use of Stansted’s spare capacity also has the potential to generate an extra 10,000 on-site jobs and £4.6 billion (€6.4bn) in additional economic activity, demonstrating the vital role the airport has to play in not just supporting economic growth and development in the region, but also international connectivity for the UK to support increased trade and investment.

And with so much growth taking place in the east of London, he said, Stansted can only continue to grow. “I think Stansted will have to exist as a two runway airport in the future, we’re quite clear about that, but that will be demand driven,” Harrison stated. “Given the fact there will be so much growth in the east, that all the runway demand should be provided in the west doesn’t make sense, so in order to be able to facilitate the growth of east London and Cambridge – I think it’s inconceivable that Stansted won’t at some stage think about a second runway.”
The first half of 2015 has been a fruitful time for Glasgow Airport. Since just before the airport was acquired by Ferrovial and Macquarie to become part of AGS Airports Limited at the end of last year, it has seen double-digit growth in monthly passenger numbers, bolstering the sustained growth in throughput it has been experiencing since January 2011. The airport recorded its busiest ever April this year, when 665,000 passengers travelled through its doors, representing an increase of 15.4% on the same period last year. There was also a marked increase in both international and domestic traffic, which grew by 20.4% and 10.9% respectively, making April its 26th consecutive month of growth.

There are a number of factors to which Glasgow’s growth can be attributed, but arguably the main driver is a renewed confidence in the airport—amongst passengers and airlines alike. The arrival of airlines such as Ryanair and WestJet, coupled with the decision by its existing airline partners to add further capacity, has undoubtedly helped persuade more and more people to fly from Glasgow. “The challenge,” began

Amanda McMillan, Managing Director, Glasgow Airport, and CEO, AGS Airports: “Our overarching vision is to be Scotland’s preferred business and leisure airport. We aim to achieve this by developing a strong and lasting route network, continuing to invest in our facilities and delivering an unrivalled customer experience.”

Amanda McMillan, Managing Director, Glasgow Airport, as always will be to sustain this growth, but we are in a very strong position. Our efforts will be aided by the welcome announcement that Air Passenger Duty is to be devolved to Scotland. Giving the Scottish Parliament full control over APD will play a major role in strengthening our connectivity and it is vital this is progressed as soon as possible. Not only will it ensure our tourism industry can continue to flourish, it will enable us to truly leverage the opportunities presented by the major events that raised Scotland’s global profile throughout 2014.”

Growing connectivity

2014 too was a landmark year for Glasgow, and one that symbolised significant change for both the airport and the city. It was the gateway’s fourth consecutive year of passenger growth, in which it served 7.7 million passengers—an annual increase of 4.8%, and its busiest since 2008. The airport also completed a £20 million investment programme ahead of a series of major international events including the Commonwealth Games, the MTV European Music Awards, and the Ryder Cup, all of which ensured the eyes of the world fell on the city of Glasgow. “All of

Booming Glasgow: City and airport growing together

The events of the last year have seen the eyes of the world fixed on Glasgow and, as its tourism industry continues to flourish, its airport is presented with the auspicious opportunity to grow with the city. Amanda McMillan, Managing Director, Glasgow Airport, and CEO, AGS Airports, explained the airport’s strategy to Amy Hanna.
these events have supported our efforts in route development by raising the profile of the city," McMillan said. "It is important we continue to leverage these opportunities by developing competing propositions for airlines to ensure they choose Glasgow over competing markets."

Glasgow has, therefore, been left with a tremendous legacy, and in 2015 the city will once again open its doors to the world to host the prestigious Turner Prize, the IPC Swimming World Championships and the World Gymnastics Championships.

The emerging prominence of the city on the global stage is one of many reasons why airlines are now clamouring to fly to Glasgow – a city described as the economic powerhouse of Scotland. The city’s burgeoning tourism trade is also a contributing factor, and the airport has cultivated successful relationships with regional and national bodies such as Glasgow City Marketing Bureau and VisitScotland to tell the city’s story and further promote the region’s and Scotland’s international standing. "This partnership approach is hugely effective, and together with our partners we will continue to vigorously pursue new routes," McMillan commented. "It has already yielded hugely positive results and in 2015 alone we will launch 20 new routes, including direct flights to Halifax, Nova Scotia; Las Vegas; Cuba; Bordeaux; Munich; Prague and Budapest. We have always been extremely proud of our position as Scotland’s leading long-haul airport, so the addition of further long-haul flights has been particularly pleasing."

Glasgow’s low cost carriers including Ryanair, Wizz Air and easyJet, its biggest carrier, have also strengthened its connectivity with a number of European cities. In April, Wizz Air made a series of announcements including the launch of direct flights to Budapest, Vilnius and the Polish city of Lublin. Ryanair now serves 10 destinations including Warsaw, Berlin and Riga, while easyJet has added Bordeaux, Dubrovnik and Marrakech. Not to be outdone, Jet2.com has continued to add capacity, and the addition in May of a sixth-based aircraft cemented Glasgow’s position as the airline’s largest Scottish base, with new flights added to Prague, Malta and a number of sun destinations. "Taking all of these developments together we expect our passenger numbers for 2015 to step comfortably above eight million and put us on track to achieve nine million."

"We want to continue to add destinations to our route map, and this includes ensuring we have enough capacity to London and the UK regions," McMillan furthered. "It’s for this reason that we have a vested interest in the ongoing debate on whether to build a new runway at Heathrow or Gatwick. This decision is not just about London and Surrey, it has significant implications for Scotland." The Airports Commission is examining how airport capacity can be expanded to improve links to the rest of the world for businesses and travellers from all the countries and regions of the UK, not least Scotland. "At the heart of the challenge is the need to ensure we have a world-class hub airport which can meet demand for new routes to emerging markets both now and in the future."

Growing infrastructure

The airport has recently completed the extension of its east pier, a development embarked upon in direct response to its success in securing a number of new routes and services. Not only has it significantly enhanced the airport’s facilities, it will improve the passenger experience for the millions of people who travel through its doors every year. "The £3 million project involved the construction of a two storey, 1,400sqm extension to the pier which serves airlines including Ryanair and easyJet. It also resulted in the creation of a spacious and modern gate room for departing passengers," McMillan described. "Importantly, the extension provides us with the flexibility to accommodate and respond to further growth. It also reflects the modern fleet employed by airlines. The East Pier includes a pier served Code E stand bringing our total number of Code E stands to six. Long-haul travel is where we see our growth and that is why it is vital our investment plans are aligned with the long-term business strategy."

In May of this year Canadian airline WestJet opened its first UK base when it launched direct flights between Glasgow and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Derek Mackay MSP; Gregg Saretsky, CEO of WestJet; Amanda McMillan, Managing Director, Glasgow Airport; Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia; Cllr Gordon Matheson, Leader of Glasgow City Council; and Gordon Campbell, Canadian High Commissioner to the UK, commemorated the inauguration of the airline’s second transatlantic service.
Neil Pakey is CEO of Shannon Group plc, which was established in September 2014. Shannon Group is a commercial semi-state company and comprises four strategic business units: Shannon Airport, Shannon Heritage, Shannon Commercial Properties, and the International Aviation Services Centre (IASC).

The current Shannon story is undeniably one of success, and it is clear in conversation with Pakey that there is a buzz about the airport and the region. This can be seen in the latest passenger figures, which show healthy 5% year-on-year growth in May. Inbound tourism from the US was a big growth factor. Last year saw strong growth of 10% across the airport’s five US services – Boston, Chicago, Newark, New York-JFK, and Philadelphia. “This year has seen the announcement of increased capacity by a number of our carriers servicing the US market,” Pakey explained. “Having secured huge growth in new capacity last year, particularly through United Airlines and US Airways, 2015 will be a year of consolidation and further growth. In total, an extra 46,000 seats will be available on US services to Shannon this year, representing an 11% increase, as Aer Lingus, Delta and American Airlines increase frequencies and capacity on their services.” Importantly, Shannon is presently one of only two airports in Europe with US CBP passenger preclearance. Shannon Airport achieved significant passenger growth in its second year as an independent entity, with 17% growth in 2014 to over 1.6 million. There is confidence that the airport can build on that tremendous increase this year, with a focus on tourism growth from key markets. “The great thing about Shannon is that it sits as the gateway to the real Ireland, the rural and friendly Ireland that the tourists identify mostly with,” Pakey enthused.

Indeed, the Wild Atlantic Way is emerging as a tremendous success story and is creating extra business and employment all along the Atlantic coast. Shannon Airport is at the heart of the Wild Atlantic Way and the main access point for international visitors travelling to Ireland to experience its wonders. “We recently partnered with Fáilte Ireland and Aer Lingus on the launch of a newly branded ‘Wild Atlantic Way’ Aer Lingus Boeing 767 aircraft,” Pakey explained. “The plane, which will be branded for 12 weeks, will fly the Boston Logan-Shannon route. The newly branded plane is an exciting way to get our message into this key market. Last year’s launch by Aer Lingus of a daily, year-round Boston-Shannon service provided a significant boost to capacity, and the introduction of the new larger 767 plane will further increase capacity on this route by almost 7,000 seats.”

Meanwhile, last year Shannon Airport undertook a number of capital expenditure projects to upgrade facilities. It spent €4.4 million on an airport runway overlay upgrade, fire safety upgrade works, a new retail IT system, and a new traffic management system. This year will see further investment in the terminal building with a transit lounge upgrade, further upgrade of the arrivals hall, improved gate areas, and a revamp of the duty free shop. There are also plans to introduce a Shannon Duty Free online shop. “One thing unique about Shannon, thanks to its positioning within Shannon Group, is that we are the only airport with six castles. Our tourism company Shannon Heritage operates a range of visitor attractions in Clare, Limerick and Dublin, including King John’s Castle in Limerick city, 15th century Bunratty Castle in County Clare, and Malahide Castle and Gardens in Dublin. Shannon Heritage and Shannon Airport work closely together to drive even more tourists into Ireland,” Pakey concluded.
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The centralisation of the security checkpoints, which was completed on 3 June, presented Amsterdam Airport Schiphol with a significant task. To enable the transition to central security, an extra floor was constructed in Departure Halls 2 and 3 to accommodate new checkpoints, and in Piers E, F and G an additional level was built to separate passenger flows. The resulting three central security checkpoints for departing passengers and two for transfer passengers make for a far simpler and more intuitive experience for travellers, who no longer have to pass through one of 130 security lanes at the departure gate.

Central security itself is nothing new in Europe, but Amsterdam Airport Schiphol now boasts one of the world’s more unique airport security experiences. Gone are the slow-moving queues and sterile environment, and in their place is something referred to as the “Schiphol Security Experience”, which balances efficiency, stringent safety measures and customer experience, essentially delivering what has been labelled “security as a service”.

During a visit to Amsterdam Airport Schiphol ahead of the completion of the project, Airport Business explored the first 15 of the new-look security lanes in Departure Hall 1 first-hand to find out what difference they will make to the overall passenger experience. Ron Louwerse, Director Security at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, explained that Schiphol Group’s philosophy is to view security “not as a necessity, but as a service.”

A unique security checkpoint

What is most striking about the new security checkpoint is that it feels very different to your average airport security screening zone. The use of white with wood tones, the natural light, the plants, the curved design of the lane all help to create a calmer atmosphere.

As for the process itself, up to three passengers can prepare for inspection simultaneously thanks to the larger preparation area, meaning the queues move faster, and use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chips means staff can easily “mark” trays that may need closer inspection further along the line. If a member of staff needs to do a manual check of a cabin bag or other item, the divider sends the tray to a dedicated belt, which is visible through a glass screen so the passenger can still see where their bag is. Once they have passed through the scanner, those passengers whose cabin bags are cleared can make use of a re-composure area, where they can put on their coats, put their liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGs) back in their cabin bag and prepare to enter the departure hall at their leisure. The end result is a smoother, more seamless and calmer process.

Co-creation

A number of stakeholders have played a vital role in making the Schiphol Security Experience a reality, including IATA, the Dutch government and KLM, in addition to suppliers such as Optosec, and I-SEC. Amsterdam-based Scarabee Systems & Technology has also been a pivotal player. The company developed the first physical prototype of the new security lane in August 2013, hosted multiple brainstorming sessions at its Security Experience Centre with all of the stakeholders to establish the requirements, compliancy and cost, and then continuously trialled the mock-up at its headquarters. After further prototyping, trialling, onsite user tests, performance tests and a final project evaluation, the lanes went live a little over a year after the development of that first physical prototype. By the end of this year, a total of 67 lanes will be in operation across the five central checkpoints.

Michael Tan, Scarabee’s President, said: “This co-creation approach allowed us to do things in a very short timeframe, although you always have to make alterations to make things perfect. Doing this together with other clients and
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There are now three central security checkpoints for departing passengers and two for transfer passengers, as opposed to 130 separate security lanes at the departure gates.

stakeholders, developing confidence and expediting decision-making has been key, especially on a project that impacts the entire airport.”

He also explained that the newly designed security area is positively impacting the relationship between passengers and staff. “If you see that passengers are much more relaxed, it has a more positive effect on staff as well. It has created a better relationship. The passenger at the end feels much better, even excited. When you talk about security as a service, the passenger should be amazed by the experience. The human factor is paramount.”

Optosecurity, a long-time development and technology partner of Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, also had a key role to play and from the very outset worked alongside the airport project team and other partners on the design and delivery of the final solution.

The company’s eVelocity solution has already been deployed at 15 lanes as part of the VFilter project, enabling the airport to improve screener efficiency and performance, and optimise operations by reducing the number of screeners required. This is achieved by moving them away from the lanes and into a dedicated remote screening room, where they can view the X-ray images in a quieter environment.

Tim Mathews, President and Chief Operating Officer, Optosecurity, said: “By removing screening from the often noisy and busy environment of the lane itself, screeners can focus their attention on the X-ray image in front of them and make the best security decision possible. Likewise, having a dedicated team of screeners focused exclusively on the task at hand and working more efficiently means that fewer screeners are required to operate the checkpoint and cope with passenger flow.”

Mathews explained that the security filters now seem “less imposing and more service-oriented”. “The time spent waiting in line is significantly diminished by increasing efficiency of the security process,” he said, adding that Optosecurity has been firmly focused on enhancing the security process while maintaining the highest levels of security.

Future proofing airport security

While the new-look security area has had an immediate impact on the passenger experience, Schiphol and its partners are also focusing on the longer-term. Sander Olivier, Policy Advisor for the National Coordinator for Security & Counter-terrorism at the Dutch Ministry of Security & Justice, explained that the “lane is designed to cope with future challenges”. “We need a system that can focus on new threats and existing threats,” he added. “We truly believe that passenger screening should be able to breathe with the threat, and the system should be flexible enough to do so.”

A number of so-called “SURE!” trials – national pilots led by the Dutch Government – are also currently being undertaken across Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, some with a view to creating a more risk-based security process using dynamic algorithms. Behaviour detection, Olivier added, could also help to enhance screening and expedite the process for low risk passengers.

Inspiring the industry

Airport security is a fluid process – it is ever-changing and airports, governments, suppliers and all other stakeholders must always be planning ahead, which is exactly what Schiphol Group and its partners are doing – and it is equally evident that Schiphol Group is committed to leading developments in this space.

The new-look security area makes a telling difference to the overall customer experience without compromising safety, and the complete centralisation of security at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, coupled with the rollout of the Schiphol Security Experience, is certainly a step in the right direction.

Schiphol Group and its partners have now raised the bar to deliver security as a service. As Olivier aptly summarised: “We hope that airports around the globe will be inspired by what Schiphol is doing.”
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There perhaps couldn’t be a more appropriate airport to host the 25th ACI EUROPE General Assembly, Congress & Exhibition. The theme of this year’s event is ‘Airports and the Future of Tourism’ – an area of key strategic relevance to both Václav Havel Airport Prague, and the city of Prague itself. Václav Řehoř, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Czech Aeroholding, shared his vision for the continued sustainable growth of the airport with Ross Falconer.

Prague is, of course, a political, cultural and economic centre at the heart of central Europe. Its rich history makes it a popular tourist destination, with 5.3 million visitors in 2014. The city’s attractions are myriad – from Prague Castle to the iconic Charles Bridge – and the historical centre, with the Old Town Square at its core, is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Indeed, Prague was voted number 5 in this year’s TripAdvisor Travellers’ Choice Destination Awards.

All of this makes Václav Havel Airport Prague a particularly fitting host of the 25th ACI EUROPE General Assembly, Congress & Exhibition, the theme of which is ‘Airports and the Future of Tourism’. ‘Airports are undoubtedly an inseparable part of the tourism industry, and I am proud that the world’s leading airports and airlines, together with other tourism industry stakeholders, are arriving in Prague to discuss further developments in this field, stressing a need for a close cooperation and mutual understanding,’ Václav Rehoř, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Czech Aeroholding, commented.

The popularity of Prague as a destination is certainly borne out by the airport’s traffic figures. Václav Havel Airport Prague welcomed 11.1 million passengers in 2014 (+1.6%), and forecasts for 2015 indicate an overall increase of about 3%. It handled over two million passengers in the first quarter of 2015 – a 3.58% year-on-year increase. Rehoř explained that the biggest rise was experienced on routes from Europe and the Near East, with London, Rome and Dubai among those performing particularly well. That success has continued into Q2 – a 7.8% year-on-year increase in passenger numbers was recorded in May.

Increasing terminal and apron capacity

Development of new airport infrastructure is vital in the context of this continued growth. ‘To remain competitive, and be able to meet the needs of airlines and passengers in the future, we are investing in state-of-the-art technology and projects,’ Rehoř explained. He highlighted the reconfiguration of stand 14 and its connected gate, which will enable it to handle larger capacity aircraft. ‘This will speed-up the handling of large aircraft by about one-third,’ Rehoř added.

Meanwhile, the major ongoing project is the new parallel runway, which is currently in the preparatory stages. Passenger numbers are forecast to rise to 15 million a year by 2024, which will require the use of this new runway. ‘We are currently working on increasing the terminal capacity too, to ensure that upon opening the new parallel runway there is enough terminal and apron capacity,’ Rehoř said.

Some 3.5 million travellers each year use public transport to access the airport, and there is a clear commitment to delivering a fast and comfortable connection. Recent public transport developments, particularly with Prague’s metro and bus networks, have made the journey to the airport quicker in the latest enhancement to the passenger experience. ‘Together with Prague City Hall and Prague Public Transport Company, we have prepared a fast and modern connection between the airport and the city centre, taking 30 minutes and at prices equal to a little over €1,’ Rehoř noted.

He articulated a strong desire to increase passenger satisfaction across all aspects of
Václav Havel Airport Prague has a strong desire to increase passenger satisfaction across all aspects of the airport journey – improvements have been made this year to the parking and food & beverage offers, with the goal of expanding the proposition for passengers. There are also plans to introduce e-gates for automated passport control.

“Among our long-term projects, we wish to reinforce the positive perception of our country and its capital city. Therefore, we have decided to locate objects featuring motifs of Prague and the Czech Republic around the airport’s premises,” Řehoř explained. “We have also announced a new architectural competition for the creation of a new outdoor area in front of the terminals, which will provide a comfortable environment even for future increased passenger volumes.”

While increasing passenger satisfaction is one key objective, the second is to facilitate the growth of non-aviation revenues. A new retail concept, including walkthrough stores, is planned. There is also a wish to move some restaurants closer to the gates. “As early as this summer season, we will introduce improved signage and overall communication of the restaurants we operate. Prices are also being adjusted to better reflect the price/quality ratio. Last, but not least, we have also attracted appealing new tenants, such as the network of healthy fast food restaurants Rancheros,” Řehoř commented.

**Prague Airport Incentive Scheme**

Václav Havel Airport Prague offers airlines a transparent incentive programme, which, through discounts on airport charges and marketing support, is designed to motivate airlines to launch new connections and increase the frequency of their existing services to Prague. The Prague Airport Incentive Scheme has been extended – alongside discounts on landing charges, it now also provides discounts on passenger service charges for the first year of operation. Support is provided for new connections, expanded services outside the main operational season, and for the use of aircraft with larger seat capacity.

Preparations are already underway for the winter flight schedule. “The Prime Minister personally assigned me the task of negotiating a new direct route between Prague and China. After very intensive negotiations, we were most successful with Hainan Airlines, which is able to launch a new direct Prague-Beijing connection as early as this autumn,” Řehoř said.

The airport is striving for further long-haul connections where it sees passenger demand, including Bangkok, Tokyo and Hanoi, and has identified Shanghai as another Chinese destination with strong potential. “We will also endeavour to extend the seasonal route to New York to a year-round operation, and extend Toronto and Montréal services for the entire summer season,” Řehoř added. “As for new routes to the American continent, we see passenger interest in a connection to Chicago, for example.”

It is clear that Václav Havel Airport Prague is pursuing a progressive growth strategy. Delegates at this year’s ACI EUROPE General Assembly, Congress & Exhibition will experience many of the airport’s passenger experience enhancements first-hand, as well as the vibrant, historic city of Prague. “It is a real pleasure for us to host such a prestigious event. We have worked hard to prepare amazing social functions in order for delegates to enjoy the unique charm and beauty of our capital,” Řehoř concluded.
Finavia’s CEO Kari Savolainen explained to Amy Hanna how Helsinki’s unique geographic positioning, unparalleled connections and exceptional passenger journey set it apart from others on Europe's aviation landscape.

Propelled by the growth of its capital’s flourishing gateway, Finland’s is a network of connectivity that extends across the world with admirable breadth. When compared to its population of 5.4 million, the vast scale of Finland’s web of direct links to more than 130 destinations seems especially conspicuous, while the prominence of the air transport industry in the nation is evident in its 4.7 airports per million people – a number considerably greater than the European average of one.

In the battle between its hubs for dominance over the European air transport enclave, Helsinki’s strength lies in its ideal geographical location. The airport is northern Europe’s leading hub in transfer traffic between Europe and Asia, and facilitates the shortest route between the two continents, which together with its swift transfer times and smooth transit processes, delivers a streamlined experience for its passengers, and makes Helsinki a formidable contender in the fray.

Finland’s robust air transport infrastructure is of much importance to the country’s economic prosperity. Its relative remoteness means that its international connectivity is a key factor in the growth of the electronics, engineering, manufacturing and biotechnology industries on which its economy thrives, and as well as enabling these businesses to sustain their competitiveness in the global market place, aviation is also a significant financial contributor to Finland’s wealth. A study commissioned by IATA in 2012 found that air transport contributed €5.830 million (3.2%) to the Finnish GDP, and supported more than 100,000 jobs, while in the same year it contributed €2.5 million to the government in tax.

16 million passengers passed through Helsinki Airport last year, of which four million comprise of the highly mobile, and largely affluent, Finnish public and the 23 regional airports across the country that use Helsinki as a transitional focal point. The other 12 million travellers that make up its throughput are partially those passengers who come to the airport from its wider catchment – Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Germany, and Baltic states such as Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and the St Petersburg region of Russia – and of the millions of passengers that rely on the gateway as a connecting point between Asia and Europe. Together, these three passenger flows create an attractive environment for Helsinki Airport’s airline customers, and Finavia’s strategic direction continues towards the fortifying of its market share in traffic between the two continents, with its primary source of growth remaining in Asia-Europe transit travel.

A rising, resilient hub

Despite surrounding competition in the form of Europe’s busiest air transport gateways, Helsinki is a rising, resilient hub, abundant in power and potential that is only growing with the booming Asian market (from which it serves two million passengers a year). The airport is differentiated by the cooperation of its comprehensive hub-and-spoke system – far-reaching narrow-body connections to Europe – and its extensive long-haul network to Asia and the US. At present the airport directly serves 15 destinations in Asia, and it is this connectivity that makes its role in European aviation such a pivotal one – neighbouring hub Stockholm Arlanda currently serves two.

"Helsinki is very different from the traditional European hub, and one thing that makes us stand out is our transfer
times and the fact that our flight schedules have been optimised here to suit the Helsinki passenger,” explained Kari Savolainen, CEO Finavia, operator of Helsinki Airport. “Because all of our airport facilities are under one roof and we have a compact, but densely active, system here, we can guarantee short transfer times – and easy navigation.”

Helsinki’s position as a sturdy hub between Europe and Asia also means that its operations are angled towards its transiting passengers in a way that is quite unique within the region. As well as working to bolster its connections in the East, Savolainen asserted that a key priority for the airport is optimising its direct links between the two continents, so that service frequencies are most suited to its airlines and passengers. “Compared to other European hubs, the transfer process is a real priority for us,” Savolainen said. “When passengers choose Helsinki they have really good connections within the air that really suit them, because at Helsinki we have designed our network so that whenever you arrive at the airport from say, Asia, you have available more or less all parts of Europe to which we are connected. Our connections on the ground are designed to suit them too. A traveller can transfer in as little as 35 minutes compared to the two hours it takes to transfer through Europe’s larger hubs.”

Finavia will soon be celebrating two years since the inauguration of the JAL Helsinki-Tokyo route – a milestone connection that operates four times daily alongside Finnair’s daily Japan flights to Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. The landmark service makes Helsinki the fourth biggest European airport in air traffic between Japan and Europe and, Savolainen said, there is a pool of potential that springs from its connectivity to that part of the world. “If you take a map, for example, from Tokyo to Sao Paulo, the shortest route between the two is via Helsinki. And nobody flies that. Of course you need to transfer here in Helsinki, to change aircraft, but that’s a great example of just how much opportunity there is here.”

“But,” he furthered, “I think where most of our ambition currently lies is in maintaining our position as an efficient airport from the point of view of both airlines and the passenger. And we want to offer a first-class transfer experience in Helsinki by 2020, when all of our developments will be in place, and that is now what we are planning.”

The transformation of Helsinki Airport
Finavia is now embarking on the far-reaching renovation of Helsinki Airport’s facilities, and earlier this year launched an all-encompassing €900 million development programme that will see developments made throughout its infrastructure and operations between 2014 and 2020, when the airport’s objective is to serve 20 million passengers a year. “The aim,” Savolainen explained, “is to ensure maintaining Helsinki Airport’s strong competitive position, especially in transfer traffic between Europe and Asia, and maintain good flight connections in Finland. We also want to provide our airline customers the kind of facilities and capacity where they can focus on growing their business.”

The operator’s plans to increase transfer traffic capacity at the airport are based on a ‘one-roof concept’ – the creation of all of its new services within the singular terminal building. “This way many of our strengths as a relatively small and compact airport, such as short distances and easily accessible services, can be maintained to continue providing a customer-friendly airport experience,” Savolainen added. “Transferring from one gate to another is easy and quick, as it will be done in one terminal.” Helsinki Airport’s development programme and terminal expansion will be executed in phases, enabling Finavia to react as flexibly as possible to potential changes in the aviation market as time
Finavia is continuing to expand its self-service bag drop facilities for its passengers. Since May 2014 passengers at Helsinki Airport, and from September 2014 Oulu Airport, have had the opportunity to use Type22’s innovative Scan&Fly technology to check in their hold baggage. Turku Airport has become the third airport to adopt the technology, and will now offer the Type22 Self Bag Drop service to passengers flying with Finnair. “Customers are accustomed to handling many stages of their journey independently,” said Johanna Bagge, Director Customer Service, Finnair. “Self-service check-in, for instance, is already used by over 80% of Finnair’s customers. Dropping off baggage at a self-service bag drop unit reduces the customer’s queuing time at the airport and speeds up the start of the journey.” Self Bag Drop by Type22 is installed worldwide at more than 15 airports, and offers passengers of over 35 airlines the best self bag drop experience, establishing Type22 as one of the world’s leading self bag drop suppliers.

The first phase is focused on increasing transit traffic capacity, during which facilities for long-haul passengers will be expanded and aircraft stands for wide-bodied aircraft increased. Planning and preparatory work will take most of 2015 to complete, and construction work is expected to start in 2016. In the second stage of the development the transit capacity of the airport will be further increased, and the service level for European and domestic flights improved. The third phase, meanwhile, focuses on expanding Terminal 2 to cover the ground traffic area. “The plan is to build one concentrated departure/arrival hall,” Savolainen explained. “Expanding the facilities to the area in front of the terminal allows us to overhaul commercial services, and parking and public transport arrangements. Related to this, we are currently extending one of our parking garages to provide Helsinki Airport with 3,000 additional parking spaces in 2016.”

“Studies show that one third of passengers choose their flight route based on the transfer airport,” he continued. “In order to keep up and maintain our strong position in the tough competition, we must develop and improve all the time. Our investments will ensure that Helsinki Airport will maintain its position as a major player in the toughening competition for international transit passengers.”

Kari Savolainen, CEO Finavia: “Helsinki is very different from the traditional European hub, and one thing that makes us stand out is our transfer times and the fact that our flight schedules have been optimised here to suit the Helsinki passenger.”
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Since the announcement in June 2013 of the development of Istanbul New Airport, talk of the €10.2 billion mega-hub has had the air transport industry captivated. The new gateway will be one of the most significant infrastructure developments ever to be undertaken in Turkey, and will propel the nation to the centre of the global aviation industry.

İGA Havalimanı İşletmesi A.Ş., the company behind Istanbul New Airport, will this year host the 10th ACI Airport Exchange, taking place on 8-10 December 2015 at the prestigious new Istanbul Congress Center in the heart of downtown Istanbul. The landmark event is expected to attract more than 2,500 visitors from every arm of the global air transport industry and over 150 exhibitors, in what is on course to be the biggest and best ever ACI exhibition. “The İGA-hosted ACI Airport Exchange will be the first major international event focused around this game-changing mega-hub, providing the first real chance for İGA and our partners to showcase the vision and the giant step towards the future that Istanbul New Airport represents,” Mertol Genç, CEO, İGA Havalimanı İşletmesi A.Ş., said.

The biggest ACI exhibition yet
The first major global event centred around the industry-stirring Istanbul New Airport mega-hub, the İGA-hosted ACI Airport Exchange 2015 will feature a major exhibition for airport suppliers. With this year’s theme, “Future-proofing your airport: Audacious development, new technologies, and competitive strategies”, ACI Airport Exchange serves as the perfect platform for aviation solutions providers to present their products and services in front of an unrivalled international audience of senior airport management – in an exhibition that is expected to be ACI’s largest yet. Already, industry-leading service providers from all across the aviation business have secured their place at the exhibition, in the ideal environment in which to showcase their solutions, share their knowledge, and demonstrate their technologies to delegates. A great wealth of exhibition stand space is still available in the spectacular Istanbul Congress Center, as are one-of-a-kind opportunities to extend brand presence across the entire ACI Airport Exchange 2015 event through a diverse variety of sponsorship packages – like the one recently confirmed by primary event sponsor and Istanbul New Airport duty free contract operator Gebr. Heinemann/Unifree Duty Free.

“Just as Istanbul New Airport is one of the foremost hub projects in the world, the İGA-hosted ACI Airport Exchange, jointly organised by ACI EUROPE and ACI Asia-Pacific, will be one of the largest ACI events ever staged, and a great bridge of airport learning between East and West,” commented Olivier Jankovec, Director General, ACI EUROPE.

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Already industry-leading solutions providers have seized the opportunity to showcase their services and technologies at ACI Airport Exchange 2015, and have extended their brand presence across the entire event through sponsorship packages, like the one recently confirmed by primary event sponsor and Istanbul New Airport duty free contract operator Gebr. Heinemann/Unifree Duty Free.
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Mertol Genç, CEO, İGA Havalimanı İşletmesi A.Ş.

“The İGA-hosted ACI Airport Exchange will be the first major international event focused around this game-changing mega-hub, providing the first real chance for İGA and our partners to showcase the vision and the giant step towards the future that Istanbul’s New Airport represents.”

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Ryanair’s Chief Marketing Officer Kenny Jacobs talks to Ralph Anker.

“Airports can have a different conversation with Ryanair now”

Kenny Jacobs is still only just over a year into the job of Ryanair’s Chief Marketing Officer, a position which didn’t even exist until the Irish ultra-low cost carrier re-invented itself as the more-like-easyJet, nicer Ryanair in the second-half of 2013. Now, instead of relying on the free publicity generated by the designed-to-shock statements and claims of its CEO (who has almost disappeared from the headlines) Ryanair has slick, on-message, peak time TV advertisements appealing to families and business executives.

Jacobs, formerly CMO of Moneysupermarket, and Brand and Communications Director of Tesco, was brought in to be central to Ryanair’s transition by taking the helm of its three-year “Always Getting Better” programme, which entered its second year in March with the launch of an unprecedented “Ryanair Customer Charter”.

All the Ryanair results point to success for the revolution, with the 2015 financial year showing a 66% increase in net profit to €870 million, and an 11% rise in passengers – now universally referred to as “customers”. While Jacobs has been busy changing the mindset of millions of European consumers to achieve this, he also claims that, within the airline, it hasn’t actually been that difficult for staff to embrace the new customer-friendly culture. “I have found it really easy – whether at the gates or on the flights – our staff are much happier without bag sizing and free seating anxieties. It is clearly a more successful model. We’re still focused on the low costs, we’re just listening more and open to changes.”

The shift to primary airports

The change in consumer profile from the “abrupt culture” has also been mirrored by other very significant changes to the product which have direct consequences for airport partners, especially the recent focus on larger gateways such as Brussels and Copenhagen: “We want half of our growth to come from primary airports – because we are listening to where people, where consumers want to fly. We now have a different product to talk to airports about – airports can have a different conversation with Ryanair now.

There’s no longer a long list of airports which won’t do business with us any more.”

However, Jacobs admits that the effect is not being felt in all markets. Despite growing overall seat capacity by around 8% this summer, Ryanair’s presence in Norway is down around 15%. Asked about this, Jacobs says: “We are not so big in Scandinavia because SAS and Norwegian are at war and we’re letting them get on with it.” Meanwhile, he says Ryanair has more ambitious plans in a giant country market – Germany – where it currently has just a 4% share of the market, compared to an average of 15% across Europe as a whole.

In line with its big German ambitions, a base at Cologne Bonn Airport was opened last year (to complement the airline’s existing Bremen, Hahn and Weeze bases) and Berlin Schönefeld will also become a major base at the end of this year. Cologne Bonn and Berlin will also be connected by Ryanair starting up to five daily flights from September. These connections will directly serve the large federal employee market – many German civil servants still live around the former “West German” capital of Bonn. Indeed, Jacobs even admits he has talks planned with the Federal Procurement Office to do a deal on fares – a far cry from the past when some European government agencies openly refused to “buy Ryanair”.

Getting personal and targeting more high-earning customers

With a changing business model Jacobs says that the airline is now also developing a very sophisticated customer segmentation model. “We have defined 25 different segments based on where customers fly – age, postcode, when they fly, their digital behaviour, ancillary penetration, etc. We have been harvesting data for three years now. Soon our high-earning customers in west London will get a very different website compared...
Then (left, 2012) and now (above). Since Jacobs’ arrival last year the deliberately-amateurish and unashamedly trashy has been ditched in exchange for a slick-Samsonite appeal to executive travellers with higher-yielding business fares and products. Jacobs is even negotiating with Germany’s Federal Procurement Office to provide travel for civil servants.

with a price-conscious customer in Bucharest. Are we seeing more high-earners? Yes. Are we getting them from airlines like easyJet and Lufthansa? Yes. These digital innovations and use of data are the most exciting things influencing our model over the next few years. Airlines have been behind banks and retail – even though over 90% of the bookings are made through our own channels, something they would envy.

The onboard product is also evolving. “We are introducing new uniforms, we will have the Sky Interior on the new 737-800s arriving this year, the yellow will be toned right down and there will be slimline seats.” Although some things never change – they still won’t recline. But we are introducing coat hooks. There won’t be a place to put the inflight magazine, but consumers wanted coat hooks most of all. The food is also getting better. WiFi will probably come in about two years’ time, but we haven’t decided on what model. It could be Unilever-sponsored or perhaps P&G (where Jacobs also used to work) – I am sure they would love to present Pampers to our customers.”

A Ryanair first: Interlining
As an airline which has always been firmly disinterested in the hassles of connecting – even self-connecting over its major bases like London Stansted – another revolutionary change in strategy has come about with Ryanair now viewing connections, or even interlining with other carriers, as a possibility. “There are in fact some real opportunities – a transatlantic airline operating into London Stansted would have much bigger choice of Ryanair destinations than there are European connections from London Heathrow – such an airline should come and talk to us. I would be quite surprised if connections and feed don’t happen in the next five years.”
Earlier this year, ATU Duty Free fought off fierce competition from other world leaders in duty free to manage Houston George Bush Intercontinental Airport’s duty free operations for the next 10 years. Dr Sani Şener, President & CEO, TAV Airports, explained to Amy Hanna how the retailer’s first business in the US provides it with a much-valued foothold in a market flush with opportunity.

ATU Duty Free enters US market with Houston George Bush Airport contract win

In a development earlier this year that will forever change the business of one of the world’s most influential duty free companies, ATU Duty Free was awarded the tender to manage the duty free operations of Houston George Bush Intercontinental Airport. ATU Duty Free – the travel retailer, distributor and supplier operated in a joint venture by TAV Airports Holding and Unifree Duty Free/Gebr. Heinemann – will operate the airport’s 700sqm duty free area, which served more than 41 million passengers in 2014, for the next 10 years.

The agreement between the airport and ATU Duty Free marks the Turkish firm’s milestone first business at a US gateway, and establishes a legitimate foothold in what is the biggest aviation market in the world. “We won the tender for the duty free operations of Houston George Bush Airport for 10 years as a Turkish brand after the fierce competition in the US,” TAV Airports President & CEO Dr Sani Şener said at the time. “The success we achieved is another indicator of our significant industrial growth.”

Şener explained to Airport Business that the duty free contract, which will begin in July, will serve as ATU Duty Free and TAV Airports’ footprint in the US – a footprint that Houston City Council, Houston Airport System and all of its competitors will be eyeing carefully. The principal aim, he said, is to leave an excellent and enduring impression, and introduce ATU to the US market in a “robust” way. “We consider it very prestigious to be a player in the biggest market in the world,” he stated. “It will be our first operation in the US, but we are very confident that we can adapt easily to different cultures and conditions. Houston is a strategically important city. Passenger stats are increasing and the city is investing in the airport. A new international terminal will be built in the next few years, so there will be more opportunities for us in Houston. Additionally, Istanbul is well-connected to Houston via Turkish Airlines direct flights.”

Houston is a highly developed city in terms of economy, and tourism is one of the main drivers of its prosperity, with visitors to the city growing in number and direct flights from major cities in Europe and Asia increasing every year. Though the US duty free market may not currently rank in parallel with that of Asia, Europe or the UAE, Houston and many other cities are rapidly emerging markets in the travel retail sector that indicate real market development opportunity, with plenty of scope for growth. “We must first establish a successful operation in Houston. Then we intend to expand our business to other cities and states in the US,” Şener said. “We fully intend to show our quality and depth of experience that we have already gained in different regions, serving many passengers with different cultures, discerning tastes and purchasing needs.”

In the first quarter of this year the number of passengers served by ATU Duty Free grew by 7%, while revenue grew by 20%, and the Houston George Bush Airport tender is the third the company has won outside of the TAV ecosystem in the past year, following Salalah Airport, Oman, and the Tunisia Carthage package. “We want to ensure that ATU’s success in the last years continues in a sustainable manner. North Africa, Middle East, the Caucasus and the USA are the target regions for us,” Şener commented. “Whichever market TAV Airports enters, ATU will be the duty free operator and partner. So, thanks to our flexible organisation structure, we genuinely see future growth for the business.”

Dr Sani Şener, President & CEO, TAV Airports: “ATU Duty Free has the experience and knowledge through our major airport operations with TAV Airports – we are a very well-known company in the duty free sector.”
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Technology is improving the passenger journey in many ways. Dave Bakker, EURO President, SITA, shared his insights into how it is being used to enhance the experience of connected travellers with Ross Falconer.

Meeting the expectations of connected travellers

Technology is playing an increasing role throughout the end-to-end travel experience. The 2015 SITA Passenger IT Trends Survey shows that the proportion of passengers carrying smartphones has risen to 83% from 81% last year, while 15% travel with three mobile devices – mobile phone, tablet, and laptop. Dave Bakker, EURO President, SITA, said that these connected travellers are happiest when using their own devices throughout their journey.

With this in mind, SITA's EURO ICT Forum, taking place in Athens, 28-29 October 2015, will provide insights into the technologies that will play a major role in addressing the growing expectations of connected travellers.

Airports are committed to improving the passenger experience through a wide range of technologies. Beacons, for example, are set to join smartphones in transforming the way passengers receive and digest information in the terminal. "Their location-awareness capability provides a unique opportunity for airports – when an app on a passenger’s smartphone detects the signal by moving within range of the beacon, it can trigger an action in the app taking account of the passenger’s location," Bakker explained. "The great thing about beacons is that airlines, retailers and other airport partners’ apps can all trigger useful content for passengers."

SITA has launched the Common-Use Beacon Registry, which means a single set of beacons can be used; airlines, retailers, and other service providers, can all provide beacon-based services without incurring the cost of installing beacons. "As well as cost-cutting, the IT is simpler and eliminates the need for everyone to manage their own beacons," Bakker added.

Wearable tech to feature prominently

There is potential for wearable tech to both improve the passenger experience and streamline operations. Findings from the 2014 SITA Passenger IT Trends Survey suggest wearable tech will feature prominently in the future. Nearly 77% of the passengers surveyed said they would be comfortable with airline or airport staff using wearable tech to help them on their journey. "Whether it’s a personal wearable device, or one being used by airport/airline staff, there is clearly an appetite for wearables in the airport context," Bakker commented. "Wearable tech currently being used/trialled includes smartwatches for boarding pass storage, and Google Glass for check-in. For example, SITA has run successful trials of Google Glass with Virgin Atlantic at London Heathrow. We have worked with Copenhagen Airport to test Google Glass as a customer relationship management tool."

Meanwhile, Abu Dhabi Airports has selected SITA technology for its new Midfield Terminal, which opens in 2017. SITA's next generation airport management system, common-use passenger processing platform, automated boarding gates, flight information display systems, and baggage management services will underpin how the operations, including passenger management, will be run. "What passengers can expect, and what the IT support system SITA is putting in place aims to achieve, is an easy and quick journey through the airport – from check-in to flight information displays, and efficient baggage management," Bakker explained.

Looking ahead, tomorrow’s airport will embrace technology to deliver more responsive operations, and use mobile technologies to deliver personalised experiences to passengers. This ‘intelligent airport’ will also use passenger flow management that not only speeds the passenger through checkpoints and boarding, but also allows the airport to work with retail partners to increase revenues.

“We will be exploring this future at our 2015 EURO ICT Forum, discussing the technologies that will play a major role in addressing the growing expectations of connected travellers, and examining the changing air transport operations as aviation becomes increasingly connected,” Bakker concluded.
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The launch of Aruba Happy Flow, which uses facial recognition technology as the basis of a single passenger token and removes the need for passengers to present their passport and boarding pass at multiple stages of the airport journey, certainly stands out as an industry first, but what is now becoming increasingly clear is the true significance of this project and the impact it could have on the airport experience on a global scale.

Happy Flow is already transforming the way passengers are processed at each touch-point at Aruba Airport, but it could well be the catalyst for a revolution in the way passengers are identified and processed well beyond the boundaries of this single-terminal facility on the aptly nicknamed ‘Happy Island’.

Happy Flow uses facial recognition technology as the key passenger identifier. When a passenger checks in at a self-service kiosk, a photo is taken of their face, which is then verified against, and linked with, their electronic passport, while at the same time all of the usual border control background checks are performed. Then, at each of the subsequent checkpoints – namely bag drop, immigration and boarding – instead of having to present their documents, the passenger simply has to stand in front of a camera, which automatically recognises their face, which is matched against their passport and boarding pass, and grants approval to continue the journey. Each process is completed in a matter of seconds.

Delivering the project has been a complex challenge, due largely to the fact that so many stakeholders have been involved: the governments of Aruba and the Netherlands, Schiphol Group, KLM, Aruba Airport Authority and lead contractor Vision-Box, as well as its sub-contractors, including Oelan and Considerati, plus SAS.

Annet Steenbergen, Chair of the Aruba Happy Flow Board and Coordinator of Aruba Happy Flow, said “close partnership was the critical success factor” in the concept becoming reality. “This has been about two years in the works and it’s being driven by the fact that the government of Aruba wishes to offer preclearance for Europe. It already offers this service for the US, but it wants to offer the same thing for people traveling to Europe. Happy Flow is the first step in the roadmap to have European preclearance,” she explained.

‘Innovation sprints’

Aruba Happy Flow has initially been implemented as a two-year pilot, and the programme will be continually tweaked and updated during this timeframe, with any changes made at the end of so-called ‘innovation sprints’, which will last three months each. The first innovation sprint is all about consolidating the infrastructure, then the focus will shift to implementation of the ‘workflow orchestration’, which will benefit all of the public and private partners. This seamless workflow is a vital element of the project: once a passenger checks in and performs the immigration checks at a self-service kiosk, all of the airport stakeholders automatically receive this information. For instance, the immigration agency receives this information when the passenger checks in, so they know that the passenger will soon be entering the immigration checkpoint.

In essence, Happy Flow makes use of the data that has always existed, but makes it far more easily accessible and actionable for each of the stakeholders.

Steenbergen also stressed that Aruba Happy Flow places equal emphasis on security and efficiency. “It’s all about consolidating the infrastructure, then the focus will shift to implementation of the ‘workflow orchestration’, which will benefit all of the public and private partners. This seamless workflow is a vital element of the project: once a passenger checks in and performs the immigration checks at a self-service kiosk, all of the airport stakeholders automatically receive this information. For instance, the immigration agency receives this information when the passenger checks in, so they know that the passenger will soon be entering the immigration checkpoint.

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In essence, Happy Flow makes use of the data that has always existed, but makes it far more easily accessible and actionable for each of the stakeholders.
TLV Ben-Gurion Airport is Israel’s main gateway. 2014 marked a decade of the operation of Terminal 3 and concluded with a significant growth in traffic figures. Over 15 million passengers passed through Ben-Gurion Airport last year, and the annual average growth was 6% in passenger traffic and 7% in aircraft movements. Approximately 110 airlines operate at the airport, serving some 200 destinations in about 60 countries.

Major efforts were made in recent years to improve safety and efficiency in the airport’s operation, including a balanced division of aircraft noise, and improvement in a wide variety of areas - capacity, operational procedures, commercial incomes, security and service for passengers, escorts, greeters and airlines.

The HBS (Hold baggage screening) system has been implemented. The challenge in the system’s implementation was to meet Israel’s high security standards in moving to a fully-automated process based on advanced technology. The solution required an innovative development of elements that have not been tested anywhere else in the world.

The system’s implementation led to a significant improvement in the departing passenger’s process - 100% of the luggage goes through automated screening while meeting the highest international standards.

The runway upgrade project - Essential for the improvement of air traffic safety, the 300 Million USD project upgraded the runway arrangement, allowing simultaneous landings from the north on runway 21 and takeoffs from east to west on runway 26, leading to a balanced division of aircraft noise doubling aircraft capacity. Transport tracks that shorten transport times from 21 minutes to 5-6 minutes have also been paved.

Safety is a top priority at Ben-Gurion Airport. Two new safety systems have recently been implemented: an Advanced Surface Movement Guidance and Control System and Automated FOD Detection, which enables automatic detection of foreign objects on the runways.

A new control tower is due for completion this year. 100 metres tall, the tower will be equipped with state-of-the-art technological means in accordance with the most advanced standards.

An addition of a Fourth Concourse - will include eight boarding bridges, three of them suitable for handling next generation wide-body aircraft such as the A380, is moving ahead in order to adjust to the capacity at Terminal 3.

In Passenger Service - Ben-Gurion Airport has reached impressive achievements in the field of service in the ASQ satisfaction survey. It was awarded the 2012 Roll of Excellence for 5 years of consecutive achievements. Ben-Gurion Airport provides high quality technological services: free Wi-Fi surfing and interactive kiosks for orientation are available everywhere in the terminal, as do feedback and public inquiries computerized workstations. In the coming year, 120 self check-in kiosks and selfdrop counters will be added. E-passport control kiosks are available for passengers holding biometric passports.

The Airport Management has declared this year as the Year of Service. Ben-Gurion Airport will continue to improve and provide an excellent service to its customers.
making the airport process faster and safer,” she said. “People often think if something is faster it might not be safer, or if it’s safer it’s probably slower. We took a 50:50 approach. We’ve designed and developed Happy Flow to be as safe as it can possibly be and as fast as it can possibly be.”

**Expanding Aruba Happy Flow**

Initially, a number of KLM passengers with European passports travelling on the five-times-weekly flight to Amsterdam from Aruba, a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, will be invited to take part in Happy Flow, with the number gradually increased as the pilot evolves. Once the ultimate goal of pre-clearance is achieved in cooperation with the Dutch and EU authorities, passengers will essentially be treated as domestic passengers upon arrival in Amsterdam, as they will have already completed the immigration process in Aruba.

Being a first-of-its-kind project, as one would expect, the journey of bringing Happy Flow from concept to reality has thrown up numerous challenges, but a spirit of innovation among all of those involved has been a consistent driving force behind overcoming these hurdles. “For Aruba as a country, the airport, KLM and Schiphol Group, they are all very innovative players and it is this innovative spirit that brought us together. Also, the Prime Minister of Aruba and the CEOs of all of the partners have really supported this,” Steenbergen said.

**A common use, passenger-centric solution**

Another key component in this process came in the shape of Vision-Box, which won the global tender to be the lead contractor and provide the Happy Flow infrastructure. As the company’s Senior Vice President and founder, Miguel Leitmann, explained, ensuring the utmost safety and security, protecting passenger privacy and guaranteeing transparency were all of vital importance, but also among the priorities was to ensure the end result was a “passenger-centric platform” that delivers shared services. “It is very important that our solution is passenger-centric,” he said, “so it does not belong to one or the other stakeholder. The passenger owns his own information, he manages his own experience, and only in the moment he interacts with one of the touch-points by identifying himself does he allow his information concerning his flight and his identity to be used by that specific stakeholder for that specific transaction.”

In effect, every passenger has a “virtual passenger data envelope” above their head which is created during the initial check-in phase. Leitmann said, and which includes all of the relevant information needed to pass through each touch-point, and this envelope is only accessed when the passenger interacts with one of the touch-points, thus authorising the transaction to happen. “An instrumental pillar of the solution was to create trust between the passengers and the stakeholders,” he added.

Leitmann and his colleague, Jean-François Lennon, Vice President for Global Business Development & Sales, also explained that facial recognition was the ideal biometric modality to form the basis of the single passenger token, due to the fact that it is the most accurate and convenient option, the e-passport is becoming the most common form of travel document, and because it doesn’t require passengers to pre-enrol for the programme, due to the freely accessible photo of the passenger stored in their secure document chip. “Also, in any exception case, the officer can look at the picture of the traveller instead of an image of an iris or fingerprint, which by his own means he cannot identify,” Lennon said.

**Next up: Happy Flow at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol?**

The fact that Happy Flow has been developed to be a passenger-centric and common use solution is what lies at the heart of its potential on a much wider scale. According to Leitmann: “There’s no technical reason why it should not be used by other passengers, other airlines and other airports. It’s a question of orchestration.”

KLM and Schiphol Group are already undertaking a feasibility study on how Happy Flow could be implemented at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. Marten Dijkstra, Manager of Border Control, Customs and Immigration at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, commented: “With Aruba Happy Flow, we have made an innovative step to further improve the comfort of the passengers. If the experience and test results are positive at Aruba we will further develop this project. But during the first pilot, step by step, we expect the innovation sprints will be successful, and if they are, then implementation at Schiphol Airport is suitable.”

Steenbergen also said that exporting Happy Flow beyond Aruba, once its capabilities have been fully proven, would make perfect sense. What has started on a tiny island inhabited by just over 100,000 people in the southern Caribbean Sea could lead to the creation of a European preclearance programme and transform the way passengers are processed in airports around the world.
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INNOVATION SHOWCASE

Highlighting the fact that improving the passenger experience remains a priority, a number of Europe’s airports and airlines are investing in new services, facilities and technologies to help make the journey through the airport as seamless and enjoyable as possible. Ryan Ghee reports.

Gatwick Airport and easyJet collaborate on Mobile Host

easyJet has teamed up with Gatwick Airport on the latest update to its app, Mobile Host, which now combines live data from the airport’s information systems with the passengers’ booking details, location and flight time to deliver bespoke updates and notifications while the passenger is at the airport. Check-in reminders, directions to bag drop desks and departure gates, and real-time gate and baggage notifications are among the key features, with the bespoke directions enabled by integration with Google indoor maps. James Millett, easyJet’s Head of Digital, said the Mobile Host update is the “result of true collaboration” between the airline and Gatwick Airport. He added: “Passengers can now relax in the airport without the need to keep checking screens waiting for flight and gate information to appear.” Gatwick Airport Chief Information Officer Michael Ibbitson said: “For the last couple of years Gatwick has been investing heavily in its integration and data platforms to be able to provide key passenger information in real time to our airlines. “The time and effort put into mapping the whole airport with indoor maps and street-view is really starting to pay off. easyJet is our biggest airline and it is great to come to market with such innovative solutions for our passengers with them.”

Digital smart screens installed in Heathrow T2

Passengers arriving in Terminal 2 at London Heathrow Airport can now start to plan their onward journey while waiting to collect their bags, thanks to the installation of digital smart screens. The screens display a so-called ‘journey comparison generator’, which combines real-time traffic, weather and rail service information to generate live travel times and costs for taxis and the Heathrow Express rail service to Central London. The initiative is the result of collaboration between Heathrow Express, JCDecaux Airport UK and DOOH.com, and leverages live information from TomTom, Heathrow Express, Google, the Highways Agency, and the Met Office. Initially available in English, the smart screens will soon display the information in multiple languages, with the screens updating to show the information in the language of the majority of passengers on the arriving flight.

Eight European airports considered for US Preclearance expansion

Confirmation by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that the United States is exploring the expansion of the US Preclearance programme could, in theory, lead to the introduction of preclearance facilities at up to eight more European airports. At present, US Preclearance, which allows US-bound travellers to clear US customs and immigration ahead of departure so they are treated as domestic passengers upon arrival in the US, is offered at two airports in Europe: Dublin and Shannon. The eight European airports that have been identified as possible preclearance locations are: Brussels Airport, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, Oslo Airport, Madrid-Barajas Airport, Stockholm Arlanda Airport, Istanbul Atatürk Airport, London Heathrow Airport and Manchester Airport. Outside Europe, Narita International Airport, Japan and Punta Cana International Airport, Dominican Republic have also been identified as potential preclearance locations.
Recognising progressive ideas in action transforming airport performance and reputations

**INNOVATION SHOWCASE**

Summer 2015

**Visit the cinema at Vilnius Airport**

Vilnius Airport has come up with a novel way of keeping passengers entertained while they wait for their flight by teaming up with the Lithuanian Film Centre to open the FilmBox LT cinema. The cinema, which is located near gate A2, is free to access and travellers can watch Lithuanian short feature films, documentaries and cartoons while they wait for their departure gate to open.

Gediminas Almantas, CEO, SE Lithuanian Airports, said: “Vilnius Airport is not just an infrastructure, it is also the space where passengers spend a lot of time. We care about our passengers and their good mood, therefore we have established the cinema, where passengers will have an opportunity to relax before the flight, as well as to become familiar with the Lithuanian cinema.”

Liana Ruokytė-Jonsson, Head of Film Distribution, Information and Heritage Division of the Lithuanian Film Centre, praised the partnership and the opening of the cinema, lauding it as “one of the finest examples in Lithuania and elsewhere of how business and cultural institutions can cooperate by focusing on feelings and experiences of people rather than profit.”

**Finavia continues self-service bag drop rollout**

Finnish airport operator Finavia has introduced self-service bag drop at Turku Airport, making it the country’s third airport to offer the service, after Helsinki and Oulu airports.

The two-step self-service bag drop system – which allows passengers to print their bag tags at a self-service kiosk before proceeding to a dedicated bag drop counter where they can deposit their bag into the baggage handling system – is initially available to Finnair passengers and will soon also be available to those flying with SAS.

Joni Sundelin, Finavia Senior Vice President and Director of Airport Network, Sales and Marketing, commented: “Finavia invests in smoother air travel by adding more self-service functions to its airports. Scan&Fly from Type22 smoothens the travel experience in peak hours and shortens the processing time. To us, it means a lot to improve the airport experience and to make the travellers happy.”

**£16m investment to improve departures experience at LCY**

London City Airport has started work on a £16 million (€21.8m) upgrade to the Western Pier, which includes a number of passenger-focused upgrades. The Western Pier, which houses 70% of the airport’s departure gates, will be expanded by 1,780sqm, and electronic boarding gates, charging points and an additional 600 seats will be installed. New retail and F&B outlets will also be introduced. The project, which is scheduled to be complete by summer 2016, is separate to the City Airport Development Programme, for which planning permission was rejected in March 2015 by the Mayor of London.

Declan Collier, CEO of London City Airport, said: “We are creating more space, more seating and more comfort for our passengers.” He added that without development, London City Airport’s reputation of offering speed and convenience “was at risk of being compromised, but this multi-million pound investment will make the new Western Pier a cutting-edge extension of the departure lounge, with a business class feel throughout, that is accessible to all.”
SITA

**NEWS**
SITA is the number one ICT provider to airports around the world and is dedicated to making them more technologically innovative. Its wide experience means it understands the complexities and pressures of running an airport. SITA embraces and implements technologies such as Business Intelligence, NFC, Beacons and the Cloud. Every day, it helps airports become more innovative, increase their competitiveness, accelerate their growth, and strengthen the loyalty of their passengers.

SITA offers the industry’s broadest portfolio, which covers every aspect of the industry from managed global communications, to passenger, baggage, and airport operations. It complements this with consultancy in the design, deployment and integration of IT solutions.

SITA’s airport services focus on the complete integration of technology systems at airports. As a result, SITA helps airports collaborate with all stakeholders to maximise passenger satisfaction, ensure operational excellence and enhance commercial and financial success. SITA has a unique understanding of the complexities of running an airport day-to-day, and its solutions embrace the latest technologies and innovations. SITA’s solutions for passenger and baggage processing, departure and arrival control, terminal management and multimedia display systems set the standards for efficiency to help airports to achieve operational excellence.

Vanderlande

**NEWS**
Vanderlande is the global market leader in baggage handling systems for airports, and sorting systems for parcel and postal services. The company is also a leading supplier of warehouse automation solutions. Vanderlande’s baggage handling systems move 3.2 billion pieces of luggage around the world per year, in other words 8.8 million per day. Its systems are active in 600 airports including 17 of the world’s top 25. More than 20 million parcels (300 packages per second) are sorted by its systems every day. These have been installed for a variety of customers, including the four largest parcel and postal companies in the world. In addition, 12 of Europe’s top 20 e-commerce companies and many distribution firms have confidence in Vanderlande’s efficient and reliable solutions. The company is also a leading supplier of warehouse automation solutions. The company focuses on the optimisation of its customers’ processes and competitive positions. Through close cooperation, it strives for the improvement of their operational activities and the expansion of their logistical achievements. The company is also a leading supplier of warehouse automation solutions.

The company is also a leading supplier of warehouse automation solutions. The company focuses on the optimisation of its customers’ processes and competitive positions. Through close cooperation, it strives for the improvement of their operational activities and the expansion of their logistical achievements. Vanderlande’s extensive portfolio of integrated systems – innovative systems, intelligent software and lifecycle services – results in the realisation of fast, reliable and efficient automation technology. Established in 1949, Vanderlande has more than 3,300 employees, all committed to moving its customers’ businesses forward at diverse locations on every continent.

FeedbackNow

**NEWS**
FeedbackNow is the leading real-time feedback system for airports and airlines. Based on the intuitive Smiley Boxes, the solution is the only one ideally suited to be used in every key service area (security, toilets, check-in, retail, hospitality, baggage claim, etc) in order to ensure full passenger satisfaction across all touch points. FeedbackNow was founded on a simple idea – improve service at airports, stores, hotels, restaurants... on the basis of direct customer feedback. The innovative solution is used to gather the feedback of customers at different key places for the improvement of customer satisfaction regarding all services offered. Renowned European clients include Geneva Airport, Aéroports de Paris, Copenhagen Airport, Thomas Cook, easyJet, METRO, American Express, restaurants, and hotels.

The method used is intuitive – customers answer one question regarding services or products by simply pressing a button – without further, unwanted ‘surprises’, such as follow-up questions, emails, calls, etc. This maximises the rate of response, and subsequent real-time alerts are sent out in case of dissatisfied customers in order to react immediately onsite and take corrective action.

ADELTE

**NEWS**
ADELTE is an engineering company based in Barcelona, providing engineering know-how and results-driven solutions for airports worldwide. ADELTE designs, manufactures, installs, operates and maintains state-of-the-art passenger boarding bridges (PBBs), innovative ground support equipment (GSE) and smart terminal solutions, and provides high value technical services which improve performance on the apron and deliver a better experience for passengers. With hundreds of PBBs successfully installed at airports worldwide, ADELTE’s reputation is internationally recognised for setting high standards, not only in design, aesthetics, safety, reliability and comfort, but also in maintenance services, promptness of execution and customer service. ADELTE will showcase its whole range of products with a special emphasis on its advanced Apron Drive PBB designed and built to provide total safety, unparalleled flexibility and long-lasting performance; its new generation of PCA unit designed to significantly enhance operational performance on the ramp; and its new Automatic Baggage Cart Dispenser, bringing smart technology to the challenge of running busy airport terminals. As a global airport services partner, ADELTE will also showcase its full range of technical services to both airlines and airports, which ensures continuous and maximum effectiveness on the apron, and guarantees safety and comfort for passengers and operators: training, operation, maintenance, spare parts and refurbishment for equipment such as PBBs, PCAs, GPUs, VDGS, BMHS, etc.
As one of Europe’s most modern airports, Hamburg Airport offers its customers state-of-the-art infrastructure, with buildings and technological facilities meeting the highest standards. Plenty of natural light, short walking distances, ease of navigation and first-class service make Hamburg Airport popular with passengers.
AeroParker

AeroParker is a specialist pre-book and pay e-commerce platform for airports, including yield management which offers a direct channel through which to sell parking and ancillary products to passengers in advance, while building customer relationships for future commercial gain. It has 15 years’ worth of experience delivering fantastic ROI results to a number of airport clients such as London Stansted, Manchester, East Midlands, Bournemouth, Humberside and Avinor airports, and the car park booking service JetParks. AeroParker is multilingual and comes as standard with car park occupancy forecasting and dynamic pricing, a fully featured dashboard, CRM and advanced reporting. AeroParker integrates with any barrier system and merchant services.

You can chose to integrate directly to AeroParker using web services or use our market-leading passenger interface that works on any device at any screen size. AeroParker is Amazon Cloud-hosted and PCI DSS compliant.

STAND A32

Airport Carbon Accreditation

The Airport Carbon Accreditation & WSP stand will showcase the ACI EUROPE-owned programme which encourages and enables airports to implement best practice carbon and energy management processes and to gain public recognition for their achievements. This programme is the airport industry reference standard for airport carbon mapping and management, and is the only industry-specific performance based, voluntary and institutionally endorsed carbon and energy certification label. WSP is the administrator of this programme, and will be in place to provide details of the programme, its benefits, and how to become accredited, as well as information about its carbon and energy management activities.

STAND B9

ThyssenKrupp Airport Systems

ThyssenKrupp Airport Systems is one of the main providers of global gate solutions. The company sells, delivers and maintains passenger boarding bridges with innovation, the combined know-how from 12 European countries, and a highly diversified portfolio distinguishing APCOA PARKING Group from its competitors. More than 30 European airports have chosen APCOA to manage their parking facilities, making the company the market leader in this segment, too. The group currently manages around 1.4 million parking spaces at more than 7,400 locations in Europe. APCOA’s products for airport operators are parking management, e-solutions, taxi management system, parking enforcement and advertising solutions.

APCOA PARKING offers solutions for sustainable growth and operates car parks that make careful use of resources. Technical innovations such as CO2-reduced shuttle buses at airports help cities and airports reduce their CO2 emissions. Lessors can expect a sustainable approach to nature and a sustainable increase in the property’s value from APCOA PARKING. To operate profitably in the long-term, the company offers a sophisticated added value programme.

STAND A16

visitorM

visitorM, based in Ireland, helps airports automate multilingual passenger feedback from every nationality, in every language. It is a solution that gives operational teams meaningful and timely insight that enables an operational response to passenger experience issues. At the ACI EUROPE General Assembly, Congress & Exhibition, delegates can try visitorM feedback stations and see how visitorM’s multi-lingual passenger feedback goes beyond the press of a button to deliver actionable insight. Alex Schregardus, founder of visitorM, will be on-hand to discuss how delegates can use qualitative passenger feedback at their airport to help operational teams maintain toilet cleanliness, improve partner performance and measure retail initiatives.

STAND A10
The race to find the fastest airline in the world

FASTEST male/female

FASTEST AIRLINE TEAM  “The Fastest Airline in the World”

FASTEST AIRLINE CEO male/female

FASTEST AIRPORT CEO male/female

FASTEST AIRPORT TEAM  “The Fastest Airport in the World”

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Anna.aero-Budapest Airport “Golden Cake Trophies”:

- FASTEST male/female
- FASTEST AIRLINE TEAM  “The Fastest Airline in the World”
- FASTEST AIRLINE CEO  male/female
- FASTEST AIRPORT CEO  male/female
- FASTEST AIRPORT TEAM  “The Fastest Airport in the World”
- MEDIA  Fastest Aviation Media Team
- CONCESSIONAIRES  Fastest Airport Concessionaire Team
- ENTERPRISES  Fastest Aviation Enterprises Team
- MILITARY  Fastest Military Aviator Prize
- A FINISHER’S MEDAL  souvenir shirt, and gift bag for every entrant

Coinciding with the ACI EUROPE Commercial Forum, 6-7 September 2015

Fastest airline team leader – Stephen Kavanagh, CEO Aer Lingus
eezeetags

eezeetags, based in The Netherlands, is a company that develops and produces self-service bag tags to be used out of a kiosk or bag drop machine. The unique feature of eezeetags is that there is no need to remove a paper liner to expose the adhesive, this makes it an easily understandable and quick-to-use tag by the passenger. eezeetags create no waste at the point of tagging and cannot be applied in the wrong way because the 'magic' adhesive does not stick to anything but itself. At the ACI EUROPE General Assembly, Congress & Exhibition, delegates can try eezeetags for themselves and see how they are printed. Barry Vriezing, founder and Managing Director of eezeetags, will be personally present to advise the audience and explain why major European airports, including AMS, FRA, HAM and LGW, are using eezeetags for their KLM, Lufthansa, and easyJet bag drop operations. He will also outline how these airports are increasing their capacity and improving the passenger experience, which creates non-aeronautical revenue, since a less stressed passenger is more willing to spend money during dwell time.

STAND B5

Flex-O-Lite

Flex-O-Lite’s airLINES™ Marking System enhances airfield safety, improves markings’ longevity and exceeds ICAO and FAA recommendations to prevent runway incursions. A complete, innovative solution designed and engineered to provide the highest level of pilot visibility and airside safety while reducing the lifecycle cost of airfield painting due to outstanding durability, Flex-O-Lite’s airLINES™ Marking System includes these key components:

- Type III glass beads with the highest levels of retro-reflectivity
- Incredibly durable Type III acrylic resin paint
- Installation guidance from airLINES™ marking technicians
- Performance guarantees.

airLINES™ is guaranteed to:
- Improve marking longevity
- Extend the lifecycle of critical markings
- Minimise flaking paint, reducing FOD
- Increase the visibility of critical markings
- Increase pilot reaction time, reduce anxiety, lower fatigue
- Increase night time safety and daytime awareness
- Help reduce runway incursions.

STAND B10

ICSA Software International

With over 25 years’ experience, ICSA Software International and ICSA Boardroom Apps Limited are the software companies of ICSA (the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators). Renowned for its global entity management, corporate governance and compliance software, as well as highly secure board portals for the iPad and Windows devices, it has been the supplier of choice for company secretarial departments and boardrooms around the world. BoardPad is the industry leader in easy-to-use digital board and meeting packs, accessible online or offline from any location.

STAND A25

IDeaS

IDeaS Car Park Revenue Management System improves airport non-aeronautical revenues through the application of best-in-class analytics. This automated revenue management software, an industry first, leverages accurate and dynamic forecasting methodology to provide occupancy and revenue forecasting, as well as demand-based pricing fully integrated with your online car park reservation system. Through the application of best-in-class analytics, IDeaS Car Park RMS provides a graphical view of the business, and simplifies and automates tasks to allow focus on strategic initiatives that move the business forward.

For more information about how IDeaS can support the growth of your parking revenue stream, stop by its stand at the ACI EUROPE General Assembly, Congress & Exhibition to learn more about this innovation.

STAND A18
**Sponsor and Exhibitor Focus**

**Scarabee Aviation Group**

**NEWS** Since 1988, the Scarabee Aviation Group designs, develops and manufactures solutions for passenger, baggage and security processes. Redefining airport processes has become its forte and makes it a distinctive partner for the aviation industry.

Through unique technological innovations and attention to detail, its state-of-the-art airport solutions help airports and airlines to create a smooth and natural passenger flow. Scarabee solutions add something remarkable to aviation, making travelling a carefree and delightful passenger experience. The company receives continuous international media attention for introducing new standards worldwide. Signature solutions are achieved through its co-creation process by bringing together stakeholders, airports and airlines. One of its newest solutions is the redefinition of the security checkpoint. Scarabee is renowned for the Amsterdam signature security checkpoints of which the pictures, design and artwork have gone viral. It is also introducing its new BagDrop Modular Compact unit, which is its modular and fully automated check-in solution. It has simple, intuitive interaction with the passenger, optimised passenger ergonomics and common-use mode that enables passengers of different airlines to utilise the same unit.

Scarabee Aviation Group is expanding its solutions at leading airports worldwide.

**STAND A14**

**Serva Transport Systems**

**NEWS** Serva Transport Systems GmbH produces an automated parking system which increases the parking capacity in garages by up to 60%. Customers drop their cars in comfortable, bright and secure transfer stations at the entrance. From here, robot RAY™ takes over. With Serva, customers park right at their destination. The system can be planned in new buildings, as well as retrofitted in existing structures. For almost a year now, customers at Düsseldorf Airport park their cars with RAY™ successfully. Mostly frequent travellers use the service to park right at the terminal without the tedious search for a parking spot. On the other hand, the car park operator benefits from 40% additional parking spots in a prime location. Since early 2015 RAY™ is also in operation at the Audi factory in Ingolstadt. Here, RAY™ takes over the finished cars at the end of the production line and parks them, completely automated.

**STAND A12**

**Travelex**

**NEWS** Operating in over 100 international airports around the world, Travelex helps travellers receive world-class foreign exchange services, as well as improving airports’ overall revenue by providing Total Cash Management solutions.

It is constantly innovating to be the best-in-class from store design, promotions and customer service, to providing excellent experience to travellers and generating additional revenue to airports. Its ATMs deliver better value, holding up to four currencies tailored to meet airports’ needs and generate above-average revenue. Travelex provides a great range of innovative products and services, such as pre-paid cards and VAT refunds to meet the ever-changing needs of international travellers and increase airport revenues through on the spot FX conversion. Providing FX online ordering options, it responds to the latest trends among customers and gives another chance to generate profits. Through its effective staff management and modular stores, Travelex also optimises airports’ operational and capital expenditures. Working with many leading airlines, duty free shops and retailers across the globe, Travelex effectively takes care of airports’ banking and cash solution needs. The company works closely with its partners to provide solutions that perfectly match their requirements. For more information on how Travelex can help enhance your customers’ experience and generate additional revenue to your airport, meet it at the ACI General Assembly, Congress & Exhibition, where Travelex is Gold Sponsor.

**STAND A38**

**Zodiac arresting Systems**

**NEWS** Zodiac Arresting Systems is recognized as the world’s leading manufacturer of military and commercial aircraft arresting systems. EMASMAX® is the latest, most durable version of Zodiac Arresting Systems’ field-proven EMAS, developed with and approved by the FAA. EMASMAX arrestor beds are composed of blocks of lightweight, crushable cellular cement material designed to safely stop aircraft that overshoot runways. The EMAS predictably and reliably crushes under the weight of an aircraft, providing deceleration and a safe stop. It is FAA-accepted as an equivalent to a standard Runway End Safety Area and is an acceptable alternative for preventing overrun catastrophes at airports where runway end safety areas (RESA) do not exist or are impractical due to environmental or other issues. There have been nine overruns into these arrestor beds at US airports by aircraft ranging from a Cessna Citation to a Boeing 747. The lives of 243 passengers and crew members have been saved, with no injuries of consequence, very little to no aircraft damage, and minimal service interruption. EMAS installations worldwide have grown to 90 systems at 50 airports, including two each at Sichuan Province, China (2006); Madrid-Barajas, Spain (2007); Kristiansand, Norway (2012); and one at Taipei City, Taiwan (2011).

**STAND A38**
Song Hoi-See, founder & Chief Executive Officer of Plaza Premium Lounge, spoke to Amy Hanna.

‘The Merchant of Convenience’: Transit hotels are next

It is quite conceivable that Song Hoi-See, the pioneering founder & Chief Executive Officer of Plaza Premium Lounge Management Limited, knows the modern traveller better than anyone else in the industry. More than 16 years’ experience offering unparalleled premium airport services has provided him with unmatched opportunity to explore the needs of the passenger, and today Plaza Premium Lounge stands out as a touchstone for quality in value-added airport services.

An understanding of travellers’ requirements is at the very root of Plaza Premium Lounge. Following a senior career in investment banking, Song embarked on the creation of his own business, which found him flying economy class and without the working advantages of the lounges that he had previously enjoyed. From this was borne Song’s vision, that airport lounges should be available to all passengers instead of just a privileged few, and since the opening the world’s first independent airport lounges at Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur international airports in 1998, Plaza Premium has come to serve six million passengers from 120 outlets in 35 gateways, and prompted airport authorities around the world to embrace independent lounge facilities that transform the traveller experience.

“This business is only the tip of the iceberg,” Song described. “There are more than 2,000 international airports across the world, 1,000 of which would work well for us. We are presently in just 3% of this market and still today there is a perception that lounges are only for premium travellers, but once people come to know about these types of services – particularly transiting passengers – there is a world of potential to be discovered.”

Behind this burgeoning business, Song explained, is the transition of the travelling experience to a mindset – a lifestyle, in which service has become ever more significant. As more business travellers take to flying economy with the proliferation of low cost carriers and as professional travel combines with pleasure, it is ever more important to stay connected with features such as WiFi and electricity. Alongside these assets, Plaza Premium Lounge offers unprecedented experiences through a delighting offer of frequently refreshed cocktail menus, interactive open kitchens creating healthy, regional specialties, fluid work spaces, and relaxation areas in beautiful, carefully curated, surroundings – all created, Song explained, to ‘wow’ the passenger. Known to the industry as ‘The Merchant of Convenience’, Song’s unmistakable passion for creating an extraordinary passenger experience is reflected in each of Plaza Premium Lounge’s locations – differentiated from their competitors by the four “products” in which they specialise: comfort, convenience, love and care, and value.

The personal experience

Most recently, Plaza Premium Lounge opened the first independent lounge in Heathrow Airport’s Terminal 4 Departures, following the launch of its presence at the airport last year in Terminal 2 Departures and Arrivals. The stylish and contemporary lounge is the exciting first step in Plaza Premium Lounge’s US$40 million global development plan, which will see new openings in Brisbane, Phnom Penh, Salalah, Singapore, Siem Reap and Winnipeg in the coming months – as well as the creation of the first independent lounge for China Eastern at Shanghai Pudong.

Song also revealed to Airport Business his inspiring ambition for his next development at Heathrow Airport. By the second quarter of 2016, he will open his first UK airport hotel in Terminal 3 – a revolutionary location tailored to the particular needs of the transiting passenger. Over £10 million will be invested in this sanctuary for travellers, which will become one of the first of Plaza Premium Lounge’s new airport hotels. There, passengers will be able to shower, take a short sleep, have breakfast, enjoy a massage, and refresh ahead of their next meeting or flight in what Song has described as an “oasis” in the international journey. “There are many names that we associate with hotel stays, names that we know well because of their reputations,” he said. “But today there is no one name anywhere in the world that is synonymous with transit hotels. Our airport hotel will become that name – that is my vision.”

In the next year, Song will create his first airport hotels at the gateways of Abu Dhabi and also Singapore, where passengers will even be able to enjoy a cocktail under the sun by a swimming pool, minutes from the terminal. “I want people to come to, and to love, our airport hotels, for that to happen there must be a story that they talk about – it must have the qualities that they look for. And that always comes back to our four qualities of comfort, convenience, love and care, and value. If we can deliver these four things to customers, the travel experience will reach new heights, and they will come back – and that is what is important.”
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