Facing a 22% airport charges cut: “an existential threat to Dublin Airport and for Ireland Inc”

Interview: Dalton Philips, Chief Executive, daa

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Editorial: The moment of realisation

COUNTDOWN TO 2020
10 key moments & trends that changed the airport business in the past decade

AIRPORTS IN THE NEWS
A snapshot of stories from around Europe

DAA
Facing a 22% airport charges cut: “an existential threat to Dublin Airport and for Ireland Inc”

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Aeroporti di Roma improves the efficiency of airport operations through SESAR solutions

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Addressing the Aviation Cyber Risk Together

OLIVIER JANKOVEC, DIRECTOR GENERAL, ACI EUROPE

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n the mid-nineties, when I started out in the world of full time professional employment, it was not uncommon to hear of companies and government’s “vision for 2020”. The roundness of the figure was appealing, helped by a halo of culture-literate futurism. So, as we find ourselves counting down to that fateful date, what is the outlook?

As we leave the hot summer months behind us, many airports across Europe have once again broken new records in terms of passenger traffic. But beyond these seasonal peaks, the pace of growth in passenger traffic has been moderating since the beginning of the year. Even more worrying, freight traffic has been negative all along – dipping by more than -7% in June.

This reflects the combination of economic, geopolitical and industry-specific challenges which are also pointing to more turbulence in the coming months. Slowing economic growth, recessions risks, trade wars and the prospect of a hard-Brexit come along with overcapacity, rising fuel bills, ATM disruptions, airline consolidation and aircraft grounding & delivery delays. Under such circumstances, one could not possibly resent airlines for putting the brakes on their capacity growth and network expansion.

But while these are ultimately nothing else than ‘business-as-usual’ challenges affecting demand & supply, European aviation is now bracing for a much more fundamental issue: that of reconsidering its societal value.

Over the past months, more and more Europeans have lived through their ‘moment of realisation’ – the moment when they understood the existential impact of the Climate Crisis, and with it the vertigo of what this means for our societies, humankind., and their own children. That collective realisation might still be incomplete, but it will not go in reverse. As it happens, it is about to fundamentally reshape European policy. The designated President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has announced a “Green Deal for Europe” within her first 100 days in office, with the objective of making Europe’s airports will face increasing restrictions and regulations.

The Dutch government’s EU-wide campaign for additional taxation without considering earmarking the proceeds for decarbonisation agenda. “There will be change to the way we travel and live” she said. While it is still unconfirmed what the ‘Green Deal for Europe’ will exactly imply for aviation, it is hard to ignore the risks of punitive, unaligned and ultimately ineffective policy approaches and regulations.

The Dutch government’s EU-wide campaign for additional taxation without considering earmarking the proceeds for decarbonisation agenda. “There will be change to the way we travel and live” she said. While it is still unconfirmed what the ‘Green Deal for Europe’ will exactly imply for aviation, it is hard to ignore the risks of punitive, unaligned and ultimately ineffective policy approaches and regulations.

The moment of realisation

By Olivier Jankovec, Director General, ACI EUROPE

those not working in the sector is probably best encapsulated in the following quote: “Aviation is increasingly isolated by a mindless mantra of limitless growth equals boundless societal good and the ultimate constraint of no substitute for fossil fuel-based propulsion.”

Hence, it is no coincidence (and no surprise) that Mrs von der Leyen singled out aviation (together with the maritime sector) to stress that all sectors will need to contribute to the EU decarbonisation agenda. “There will be change to the way we travel and live” she said. While it is still unconfirmed what the ‘Green Deal for Europe’ will exactly imply for aviation, it is hard to ignore the risks of punitive, unaligned and ultimately ineffective policy approaches and regulations.

The Dutch government’s EU-wide campaign for additional taxation without considering earmarking the proceeds for decarbonisation agenda. “There will be change to the way we travel and live” she said. While it is still unconfirmed what the ‘Green Deal for Europe’ will exactly imply for aviation, it is hard to ignore the risks of punitive, unaligned and ultimately ineffective policy approaches and regulations.

Meanwhile, only lip service is being paid to ATM reform for the Climate – despite the potential to reduce aviation’s CO2 emissions by -10%. Currently, all efforts are on addressing flights delays and disruptions through emergency measures that are actually resulting in longer flight paths and more CO2 emissions. It is high time that a collective action plan from (Government-controlled) ANSPs and the Network Manager specifically addresses the Climate impact of ATM inefficiencies. As our past ACI EUROPE President, Michael Kerkloh, commented last June: “It seems the climate is not yet an emergency for all.”

Similarly, the review by the Commission of the EU Airport Charges Directive and of its State aid guidelines will need to align with the Climate Emergency. This should come with a greater emphasis on the ‘user pays’ principle, as well as a recognition that Europe’s airports will face increasing costs and investment to become more sustainable and meet their Net Zero CO2 emission commitment by 2050.

Against that background, it is obvious that collective industry leadership will be crucial to maintain aviation’s societal relevance. That requires going beyond CORSIA and setting a long-term ambition towards Net Zero for the whole sector. This in turn involves identifying and working on related pathways, but also coming to terms with different growth prospects – and recasting the way aviation talks about itself.

The stakes could not be higher – and they are definitely not just about aviation. Our only certainty for now is that the 2020s are going to be very different from what we had all envisioned.

“The quote is from Prof. Geoffrey Lipman, SunX Malta"
Cork Airport

Cork Airport unveils a new breakthrough cleaning technology that will prevent over 5,400 litres of chemicals from impacting the environment per year. Cork Airport’s cleaning partner NOONAN has installed the toxin-free organic cleaning solution Tersano Lotus Pro at the airport. Transforming ordinary tap water into a powerful cleaning agent, Cork Airport is the first airport in Ireland to introduce this solution. Cleaning chemical usage is projected to be reduced by over 80% at Cork Airport as a result. Tersano Lotus Pro, which can be produced on demand, has replaced a wide range of conventional cleaning chemicals at Cork Airport.

Athens International Airport

The European Commission (EC) has approved the co-funding of Athens International Airport S.A. for its evolution into a high-performing hub within the European Air Traffic Management Network. The EC will cover 50% of the total eligible investment cost amounting to €4.5 million. Athens is the first Greek airport to be selected by the European Union under the “Connecting Europe Facility – Transport Sector” programme, supporting the achievement of the Single European Sky. The aim of the grant is to enable Athens Airport to develop and implement new and advanced concepts for airport operations, airport resources management and information sharing in order to enhance its operational efficiency in the serving of the traffic and make optimum use of the available capacity on the ground and in the air. The programme will be implemented through six interrelated projects extending over a five-year period (2019-2023).

Frankfurt Airport

Fraport AG will begin using real-time predictive runway arrival times, so-called ‘ELDTs’ (Estimated Landing Times) delivered via FlightAware’s Firehose feed as an additional data source in the further optimisation of airport operations at their home base of Frankfurt Airport. Frankfurt Airport has been operating the Airport Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM) procedure since February 2011. Firehose will provide additional data sources leading to a further improved planning basis within the A-CDM framework. FlightAware’s ELDTs are optimised by machine-learning models, based on statistical analysis of flight tracks and timestamps of hundreds of thousands of flights and are capable of identifying the key influencing factors determining the prediction of flight events in real-time.

Doncaster Sheffield Airport

Doncaster Sheffield Airport will slash its carbon emissions with a new solar farm, due to be operational in 2020. It will provide 1.7 MWp of zero carbon energy, saving 220 tonnes of carbon every year – the equivalent of boiling 2.2m kettles every year. The £2 million solar farm will generate 25% of the airport’s energy and drastically reduce its carbon footprint. The development is a key part of the airport’s 20-year Masterplan which will see passenger numbers soar to 1.45m this year and forecasted by the airport to double within the next 5 years, consistent with its market breaking growth over the past five years in excess of 75%.
A new digital signage system can be found at the entrance to pier B in Terminal 1 at Prague Airport. Including a total of eight screens, it responds in six selected languages depending on the specific locations from where passengers have come or to where they are going at any given moment. This means that during the day, active language versions change depending on the composition of the passenger flow. In addition to the standard Czech and English versions, the navigation also offers Arabic, Russian, Korean and Chinese, which are the main languages for passengers who may not be able to speak English well enough. The navigation system will be tested until the end of October. After that it will be decided whether or not to use the digital navigation system in other key locations.

Moscow Sheremetyevo Airport

On 11 August 2019, Sheremetyevo International Airport celebrated its 60th anniversary. The first flight was served on this day in 1959: the TU-104 passenger airliner made the flight from Leningrad to Moscow and landed at the Sheremetyevo airfield. For more than six decades, Sheremetyevo has been meeting and seeing off leaders of states, polar heroes, Olympic athletes, famous cultural figures and world stars. Every day, the airport serves more than 150,000 passengers and provides more than 1,000 take-off and landing operations. For comparison, in 1960 Sheremetyevo Airport served 270,000 passengers, and according to forecasts for the jubilee 2019 year, the airport will set a new record and will receive more than 50 million passengers.

Split Airport

Split Airport opened its new €60 million terminal, featuring much-expanded commercial areas, notably for retail and dining. The terminal was inaugurated by Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković and Minister for Sea, Transport and Infrastructure Oleg Butković, among other dignitaries. The airport’s duty free space has increased by around three-fold compared to the previous facility, to around 1,030sqm. The retail business is run by Split Airport with Gebr Heinemann as exclusive supply partner for all but local products. The terminal has a footprint of around 60,000sqm, around three times the previous size. It features 30 check-in desks, seven semi-automated security lanes, a premium lounge and an automated baggage sorting area.

Sofia Airport

On 29 July 2019, a consortium comprising Munich Airport and France-based investor Meridiam won the contract to manage Sofia International Airport in Bulgaria. The announcement was made by Bulgarian Transport Minister Rossen Zhelyazkov. The winning consortium will manage the operation of Sofia International Airport for 35 years. Munich Airport and Meridiam have agreed to offer a concession fee of 32% of total revenue or a minimum of €24.5m ($27.5m) per annum. The consortium will construct a third terminal within the next ten years and repair the two existing airport terminals.
A passion for aviation is in the genes for daa Chief Executive Dalton Philips (51). His father Tim was an ardent aviator, staging air shows on the family farm in Co Wicklow (south of Dublin) in the 1960s. Dalton got his own private pilot’s licence at the age of 21 and considered a career as an airline pilot before choosing retail.

“Like many Irish people who graduated in the early-1990s, when there was 18% unemployment, I went abroad and built my career in retailing,” he begins.

In a quite astonishing statistic, Philips reflects that he has worked in 14 countries, always in retail, spanning senior leadership roles with Walmart in Brazil, Germany and Spain, before moving to Loblaw (Canada’s leading supermarket chain), then ending with Morrisons supermarkets in the UK. The eldest of his three children has lived in six countries; little wonder that he and his wife Penny thought the time was right to return home to Dublin.

“Then this incredible opportunity arose to return and run daa, in a sector I’ve always been deeply fascinated by at the epicentre of the Irish economy and with vast overseas interests – in addition to operating Dublin and Cork airports, we have investments in Düsseldorf, Cyprus and Riyadh, and a €1 billion travel retail business – Aer Rianta International. It was an opportunity I could not miss.”

Challenging regulator’s charging cuts

Right now, Philips is especially energised by the upcoming regulatory decision on charges for the next five years. In May 2019, Ireland’s Commission for Aviation Regulation (CAR) issued a draft determination, recommending a 22% cut in airport charges at Dublin Airport to €7.50 per passenger for the period from 2020 to 2024. The final determination is expected by early-October.

“We pride ourselves on being one of the lowest-priced airports in our category – if you compare our pricing to other airports of similar scale, we’re 30-40% cheaper,” says Philips. “We’re challenging the regulator to benchmark us against other airports. They should find that we’re extremely efficient and cost-competitive – they just need to examine this properly, and scientifically.”

Threat could halve €2 billion investment

Dublin is slot constrained at peak hours and the terminals at maximum capacity utilisation. A new, second €320 million North Runway is being built to facilitate continued growth, and a completely separate €2 billion investment will support the traffic the runway is expected to generate with new piers and aircraft stands.

Philips is unequivocal: “With a 22% reduction, we can’t finance this €2 billion programme. Therefore, we can’t build the infrastructure the country needs. So, it’s an existential threat for us, and it’s an existential threat for ‘Ireland Inc’, because the entire economy loses out if we can’t build this infrastructure.”

He describes this as “a clear example of short-termism”. Philips believes that airlines, like retailers, live from quarter to quarter, and will always be in favour of short-term price reductions. In contrast, airports must plan “generations ahead” and think about the long-term sustainability of their investments. Meanwhile, the
cold reality is that Philips estimates that the proposed airport charges cut will mean axing up to €1 billion off the investment plan.

"CAR can’t have it both ways, it can’t say it approves all of the projects in our capital programme, while simultaneously refusing to allow daa to properly fund the investment."

Philips also says the timing of CAR’s action is very bad. "With Brexit, we already have unprecedented uncertainties for the Irish economy, and in that context, we should be investing at Dublin Airport and improving, and deepening Ireland’s links with the world, not finding ways to impact trade and tourism."

He describes a “virtuous circle” in which competitive airport charges have attracted record numbers of airlines and routes. Passenger numbers were again up by 6% in the first seven months of 2019. Indeed, since 2014, when CAR issued its last pricing determination, the number of scheduled airlines at Dublin has increased from 29 to 48, while the number of destinations has increased from 178 to 203 – including many new transatlantic destinations.

DUB “already 30-40% cheaper than peers”

“The role of CAR is to ensure fair and healthy competition, but actually there’s never been more competition within Dublin Airport and between us and other airports – and we offer a price that’s 30-40% cheaper than our peers,” says Philips. “The consumer is already winning by the model that we have and will lose by the changes CAR wants.”

The proposed reduction would also be a “nightmare scenario” for Cork and the other Irish regional airports, which would have to respond by under-cutting Dublin. Philips estimates that Cork Airport will "senselessly" lose around €8 million a year.

"To bring it back to the world I used to occupy in retail, there was a huge problem when I worked in UK retailing centred around the below-cost selling of milk, which caused permanent damage to farming and other associated businesses. That’s what’s now going to happen here! You would have the largest airport selling at way below cost at €7.50 per pax.

In February, An Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Leo Varadkar TD; Dalton Philips, Chief Executive, daa; and Shane Ross TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, performed the official sod-turning for Dublin Airport’s new North Runway project.
Then other regionals would have to price under it; they’ll lose money, and the whole regional infrastructure will be impacted.”

**New runway to double DUB capacity**

Over the past decade, Dublin has rapidly transformed into a centre of excellence for tech companies such as Google, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, turning its industrial-looking docklands into what is now known as ‘Silicon Docks.’

This has contributed to the huge increase in passenger traffic. Dublin’s passenger numbers have grown by 50% since 2014, reaching a record 31.5 million last year. That trend has continued in 2019, with the 6% so far this year, although Philips cautions that growth is slowing as the airport nears capacity.

Dublin Airport supports some 120,000 jobs in the Irish economy, including nearly 20,000 on the airport campus. The economic activity underpinned by Dublin Airport, in terms of the spin-off benefits through trade, tourism, and jobs, is worth an estimated €8.3 billion to the Irish economy, according to Philips.

To protect and expand this economic impact, work began on the new €320 million North Runway in February – it will be ready for operations in 2022. Philips salutes the foresight of the planners who 50 years ago safeguarded the land for future use.

Philips explains: “We’re very constrained at the moment, and the new runway will double our capacity while it opens potential to reach parts of the globe that we’re less able to target today, because we just don’t have the capacity.”

**South American routes targeted**

There are currently no direct links between Dublin and South America, which is a key target, as are more services to Asia where Cathay Pacific already operates to Hong Kong, while Hainan Airlines flies to Beijing and Shenzhen.

Dublin is also continuing to strengthen its position as a key gateway between Europe and North America. Connecting passenger traffic increased by 18% to 2.1 million in 2018; and was again up 9% in the first seven months of 2019.

“We have a very strong, competitive advantage in two areas,” says Philips. “One is a geographic advantage – anyone who flies from Europe to North America goes over Ireland. Secondly, we have a US CBP Pre-clearance facility, so US-bound travellers can undertake all US customs and immigration procedures at Dublin prior to departure, and thereby are able to arrive at domestic terminals in the US – making very speedy downtown arrivals and onward connections. We’re still relatively small as a hub, but we’re growing and have doubled our transfer passengers over the last four years. We see maintaining and growing this strategy as a very significant opportunity.”

**Award-winning Cork’s “aggressive business development”**

Cork Airport, which won this year’s ACI EUROPE Best Airport Award in the ‘under 5 million passengers’ category, is in its fourth consecutive year of growth, with passengers forecast to grow by 10% to 2.6 million in 2019. Philips notes that the airport has been “aggressive” in its business development, with eight new routes launched in the current summer schedule.

The south west region is also a thriving part of the Irish economy. It is home to several tech firms including Apple’s European headquarters, as well as many pharmaceutical companies (GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer).

“Cork has been performing strongly, particularly into Europe with traffic up 20% year-to-date,” says Philips. “They’re really stimulating the market with destination marketing initiatives, and also offering great deals and partnerships to airlines.”

Indeed, Philips says that daa works very closely, not only with its airline partners, but also the other agencies such as Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, and IDA Ireland (the agency responsible for attracting foreign direct investment).

“If you take Cathay Pacific’s service from Dublin to Hong Kong, which was launched last year, that was a real partnership in every sense – what we would call ‘Team Ireland’ in the way that we all sat down in Hong Kong as a united stakeholder group together with the Ambassador to thrash out how to make the connectivity happen. As one of the most open countries in Europe and the world, and being a small island nation, we depend on being very outward-looking and working together with all the different agencies to get the desired results.”

**NetZero2050 commitment**

At this year’s ACI EUROPE Annual Assembly & Congress in Cyprus, Dublin and Cork joined almost 200 other airports in signing a landmark commitment to become net zero for carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest.

“daa has invested significantly in environmental management in recent years, but we need to do more and committing to net zero by 2050 is crucial to the future of Dublin Airport.”

**Dublin Airport Factbox**

- 2018: 31.5 million passengers
- 2018 passenger traffic growth: 6%
- 2019 passenger traffic growth (Jan-July): 6%
- Routes: 200+
- Key airline customers: Aer Lingus, Ryanair
- Top 5 destinations: London, Amsterdam, Manchester, New York, Birmingham
AviAlliance is a private airport investor and operator that contributes its expertise in the fields of aviation, non-aviation, master planning and financing. The portfolio includes shares in the airports of Athens, Budapest, Düsseldorf, Hamburg and San Juan.

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Caroline Accreditation. "Dublin Airport is in fact plastic, so we are testing different packaging at both Dublin and Cork airports, supporting local charities for the first time.

Water available at both Dublin and Cork airports, with its Plane Water bottles being 100% recyclable and can be reused, but we wanted to offer consumers an alternative side-by-side to see how each product would perform. We tested a carbon made from paper and plant-based plastic, meaning that 82% of the packaging comes from renewable resources. We also tested a resealable aluminium water can, and we sold reusable steel water bottles. Finally, we've retro-fitted our water fountains to make it easier to fill reusable bottles and have rebranded them to make them more visible.

"Trialling biometrics to deliver "seamless travel"

da was one of the early pioneers of the €1 bottle of water airside, with its Plane Water available at both Dublin and Cork airports, supporting local charities for the first two years. "We want to reduce single-use plastic, so we are testing different packaging alongside the existing Plane Water bottle to better understand consumer preferences," Philips explains. "The existing Plane Water bottles are 100% recyclable and can be reused, but we wanted to offer consumers an alternative side-by-side to see how each product would perform. We tested a carbon made from paper and plant-based plastic, meaning that 82% of the packaging comes from renewable resources. We also tested a resealable aluminium water can, and we sold reusable steel water bottles. Finally, we've retro-fitted our water fountains to make it easier to fill reusable bottles and have rebranded them to make them more visible."

 emissions is moving up a gear in our efforts," says Philips.

Dublin and Cork airports are both accredited at Level 2 Reduction of ACI's Airport Carbon Accreditation. "Dublin Airport is in fact plastic, so we are testing different packaging at both Dublin and Cork airports, supporting local charities for the first time.

The commitment to sustainability across both airports includes introducing more low-emission vehicles, switching to LED lighting, reducing energy and water usage, and increasing waste recycling. A solar farm was opened at Dublin Airport last year, and more are planned.

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"Planning for future growth"

Looking ahead, Philips enthuses about the opening of Abu Dhabi Airport’s new Midfield Terminal in late-2019, where Aer Rianta International (ARI) has a 10-year contract to retail the perfume, cosmetics, sunglasses and fashion jewellery categories. "I absolutely love airport retail, especially coming from the domestic grocery sector where growth is zero – if you’re lucky! In contrast, ARI is up 8% year-to-date, and our international businesses are all performing well."

In the short-term, Philips adds that daa is very much focused on challenging CAR’s draft airport pricing proposals. "In the medium-term, it’s about building the new runway, delivering our infrastructure plan, and managing the economic headwinds of Brexit and trade wars. In the long-term, we are planning for the future growth of our airport division and our international airport retail business. All of this requires the right strategy and the right talent – we are totally focused on fully ensuring we have both."

FACTBOX

• 2018: 2.4 million passengers
• 2018 passenger traffic growth: 4%
• 2019 forecast: 2.6 million passengers (+10%)
• Routes: 50+
• Key airline customers: Aer Lingus, Ryanair
• Top 5 destinations: London, Amsterdam, Malaga, Paris, Faro

Cork Airport is its fourth consecutive year of growth, with passengers forecast to grow by 10% to 2.6 million in 2019. Eight new routes have been launched in the current summer schedule.
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After the ups & significant downs of the closing years of the noughties, when everyone's calendars hit 2010 there was a palpable sense of relief, even if optimism was still in relatively short supply. Air transport is a famously shock-sensitive and cyclical industry, so when signs of an upswing occurred, things moved up a gear again. That said, it took a while for the industry to get its groove back, not least due to the bumpy beginnings of 2010, starting with…

1. VOLCANIC ASH:
For anyone working at a European airport or airline at the time, there are a few days in April that will be forever etched in their minds, not least because of how the weather contrasted with the circumstances. On a beautiful, blue sky Thursday afternoon, there was an announcement that an Icelandic volcano – the tongue-twistingly titled Eyjafjallajökull – was pushing plumes of ash into the atmosphere and some talk of this potentially disrupting aviation in that part of the world.

At first, it was just a minor story, but over the course of 26 hours, European mobility broke down, air space by air space, as an untested methodology for analysing the threat of volcanic ash was replicated by civil aviation authorities across the continent. At its worst moment, the threat of volcanic ash paralysed 313 airports – about 80% of the European airport network. Most of Europe’s airlines didn’t have a single aircraft in the sky at that point, for the first time in over 65 years. More than 10 million passengers affected all had one thing in common – they couldn’t get to where they needed to go.

In many parts of the continent, there wasn’t a cloud in the sky that weekend. It was nothing short of extraordinary – a moment when the positive contribution aviation makes to our lives was suddenly crystal clear to people.

As the centrepoint of air traffic management in Europe, EUROCONTROL became the focal point of the efforts to resolve the crisis and it was an intense few days there with regular calls involving all European States’ Civil Aviation Authorities along with industry. At industry level specifically, ACI EUROPE kept its membership informed, sending updates on how these talks were progressing, allowing them to anticipate developments and further exchanged with their own authorities. One of the key wins for ACI EUROPE was that the financial impact on airport operators (€290 million) was reported alongside that of airlines, for the very first time. More than that, it was a reminder to everyone that surprises can still happen and the next source of disruption is not necessarily something you have seen before.

For Iceland, it marked the beginning of a brilliant campaign to capitalise on the island’s notoriety – one which would see Iceland’s main airport of Keflavik become one of the fastest-growing in Europe over the course of the years to come and a case study of how to build a connectivity campaign.

Volcanic Ash was also the dawn of a new era in which air traffic management and air navigation service providers suddenly became much more visible to media and the public alike. A visibility that would intensify in the years to come.
2. EXTREME WEATHER: If April had seen the decade get off to a heady start, the end of that year brought another moment that would bookend 2010 as an annum horribilus. On 21 December, some of the worst snow in 40 years hit continental Europe with a wallop. Several major airports were heavily affected and things would only get worse in the days to come. In fact, every significant mode of transport found it challenging, but as ever, aviation received the lion’s share of media coverage, for better and for worse. This came along with close scrutiny from the European Commission as to how the most affected airports were performing in terms of resilience. Here again, ACI EUROPE acted as the trusted voice, compiling information and providing explanations for some of the snowball (ahem) effects and the rationale for different levels of winter equipment investment between airports based on their local weather conditions/patterns, costs/opportunity equations. And the usual reluctance of some airlines to see airports spending more money.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE RISE OF AIRPORT BRANDS: Those events in 2010 gave airport operators an urgent reason to be on social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook. This opened up a whole new dimension in communication with passengers. Where previously the airport was like a tunnel that passengers went through on their airport experience, now the airport could have a direct and open conversation with them via social media – all of which gave airports all the more reason to invest in their brand and corporate communications.

The words “passenger experience” became very, very prominent and all manner of competitions, surveys and campaigns followed.

Captain Sully’s miracle landing on the Hudson in January 2009 had already been a ground-breaking moment – the first example of “citizen journalism” empowered by social media – beating the news media to a story. By the other end of 2010, Twitter had graduated from being a journalist’s ‘police radio’ to become a bonafide story unto itself, with tweets from passengers and visitors to the airport site, written about alongside formal corporate and political statements.

In July 2011, Facebook launched its smartphone app. This is the moment when social media became empowered by the smartphone (and its camera) and it changed communications – turbocharging the possibility to share news, photos, thoughts and wisdom on the move.

On 21 December 2010, some of the worst snow in 40 years hit continental Europe with a wallop. Several major airports were heavily affected and things would only get worse in the days to come.

The unthinkably surreal situation of the hijacker posing for a selfie with one of the hostages, during the EgyptAir standoff at Larnaca Airport in 2016. Just one of a host of extraordinary moments that stunned the world, empowered by the combination of smartphone & social media.

The Asiana crash in San Francisco in
The colour, the speed and the open access nature of an ever-expanding array of communications channels and the accompanying culture of over-communication was something we actively sought to track and learn from, in a series of ACI EUROPE social media & digital reports we published. It also led us to establish a highly successful Digital Communication Forum, allowing our members to share best practices and learn from latest developments in the field. Which brings us to the next point:

4. CRISIS: The events of 2010 alone were enough to make every CEO and Head of Communications in air transport keenly aware that crisis management is paramount, especially in communications. In parallel to the significant investments being made in branding, communications and passenger services, no effort was spared to prepare the necessary contingencies for crises. This in turn made airport operators take stock of the information available to them, the elements they control on their site versus the elements they influence. It also helped them assess the available decision-making processes such as Airport-Collaborative Decision-Making went from being live at a small number of airports, to enjoying much wider implementation, resulting in more timely information that benefited the passengers.

6. ADDRESSING THE DATA VACUUM: As airport operators got to converse with passengers on social media, they wanted to gain insights into what their passengers really want – some early ways to do this were crowdsourcing ideas for innovations (essentially, a digital suggestion box) and new routes, conducting surveys on social about retail and other aspects. Airports also invested heavily in smartphone apps – to give passengers the information they needed and learn from users’ interactions with the apps.

On the operations side, data-driven processes such as Airport-Collaborative Decision-Making went from being live at a small number of airports, to enjoying much wider implementation, resulting in more timely information that benefited operations.

And it wasn’t just in terminal – over the course of the decade, data has gone from being about everything, its value now famously eclipsing that of oil. Hackathons became popular, within the various strands of aviation. Fittingly, in December this year, ACI EUROPE will end the decade by organising the groundbreaking Digital Sky Challenge with SESAR, Athens International Airport and a host of other aviation stakeholders. The event will bring together coders from all over Europe to dream up the data-driven solutions of tomorrow.

7. DAWN OF THE DIGITAL ERA: Those smiley faced buttons at various points in the airport, the ibeacons, the moving advertising screens, the near-field communication technologies – these all rolled out in the past decade, but we are only in the early stages of the digital transformation of airports – the prelude to a very exciting time. As remote tower technology, SESAR and other new technology solutions are deployed and the internet of things becomes more prevalent, digital will come to play a much bigger role in operations. And the emergence of drone taxi technology, vertiport functionality and more will make this all the more exciting.

8. SENSE OF PLACE/EXPANDING THE PERCEPTION OF THE AIRPORT SPACE: In a decade when travel went beyond going somewhere and became just as much about communicating where you were going, airports quickly understood that ‘sense of place’ could inform and enhance their brand, their interaction with the passenger and their place in the local narrative. This can start with simple ideas like selling local produce on the airside and retaining some display spaces
to showcasing local artists or upcoming events in the region. Broader, unusual ideas can gain surprising traction as well. The success that Aeroporto di Bologna’s Lamborghini “Follow Me” car enjoys is a fun example of this – putting a smile on the faces of passengers, personnel, social media audiences and locals alike and subliminally underlining the airport’s role in connecting Italy’s motor valley to the wider world. Let’s see more partnerships like this one please!

This was also the decade when public spaces became places of celebration for ‘flash mobs’ and airport operators would explore the possibilities for more agile use of space. More and more airport operators are trying interesting things – using their infrastructure more flexibly and pushing the boundaries of how people think about airports. Finavia having a fashion show on the runway is just one example of this.

9. OVERTOURISM – THE FLIP SIDE OF CONNECTIVITY: The confluence of experientially-inclined millennials, affluent Gen X-ers and a burgeoning ‘grey economy’ of boomers – as well as an extremely upwardly mobile Asian population with a growing sense of wanderlust – have been a boon to tourism all over Europe. However, in recent years, the flip side of all of this connectivity and focus on city-tourism has begun to show. Overtourism, a word reportedly dreamed up by travel media company, Skift, is now a very real concern for numerous European cities.

With sustainability now firmly a political and civic priority, the decade to come will surely bring questions, ideas and fresh thinking on how cities, regions and countries can better manage the growth that airports help secure, which brings us to the final topic:

10. FLIGHT SHAME: Flight Shame brings together nearly every strand mentioned in this piece – it is highlighting the effects of extreme weather and their implications for humanity, it is a movement that has been empowered by social media, the disruptive potential of the protests and activism require nimble, crisis-agile response. Data is providing insights into its impact and digital solutions such as those being developed and deployed by SESAR are part of the answer to making air transport less polluting.

At the start of the decade ACI EUROPE had just developed and launched Airport Carbon Accreditation, engaging airports to address their carbon footprints and invest in lower/zero emissions technologies to reduce their impact on the environment. That programme went on to be adopted and implemented in all ACI regions across the globe. Today, 44 European airports are operated by carbon neutral operators and another 103 are carbon accredited at the other levels of Airport Carbon Accreditation. The decade to come will see them work on their promise to become NetZero for their carbon emissions by 2050 (or even 2030 in some cases) – a commitment now undertaken formally by ACI EUROPE and undersigned by close to 200 individual airports.

On a personal note, all of these developments in the airport industry over the past 12 years have made my work in communications for ACI EUROPE all the more stimulating and rewarding. Thank you to all the inspiring and talented airport people who contributed to that! I expect that my successor will have an equally interesting time, as the pace of change accelerates. And even though I am moving on to pastures beyond air transport, I shall always see airports as the ultimate theatre of life. Happy landings (and take-offs!).

More and more airport operators are trying interesting things – using their infrastructure more flexibly and pushing the boundaries of how people think about airports. Finavia having a fashion show on the runway is just one example of this.
An unprecedented number of aviation partners are joining forces to bring you the Digital Sky Challenge: a 48-hour innovation sprint aiming to create new digital technologies that will help meet the future needs of the European aviation system in terms of capacity, safety, efficiency, and environmental impact.

We are looking for new digital solutions in these 3 key areas:

**CHALLENGE 1  PASSENGER EXPERIENCE**

How can we increase the reliability of flight delay information and improve the delivery of such information through better use of big data?

How can you help passengers find their way in airports, helping them to follow the fastest way to reach their boarding gate?

**CHALLENGE 2  ENVIRONMENT**

How big is the impact of extreme weather events on aircraft emissions and noise, looking at aircraft movements and data sources like weather and noise monitoring?

How far does your green creativity go for a multimodal mobility tool that informs passengers about emissions caused by mobility choices they take?

**CHALLENGE 3  SAFETY**

Based on safety data, can we determine how air traffic patterns influence the development of a safety incident?

How can safety events be predicted considering both aircraft and external factors?

FIND OUT MORE & REGISTER BY 15 OCTOBER AT WWW.DIGITALSKYCHALLENGE.EU
Aeroporti di Roma (ADR) and the Italian air navigation service provider (ENAV), together with the EUROCONTROL Network Manager, organised a conference on the impact of Air Traffic Flow Management delays on passengers and on operations at airports on 20 June in Rome. It was the first time that Italian operational stakeholders gathered together to discuss how to overcome and mitigate airspace congestion. It soon became clear that solutions for additional capacity will – at least in the mid-term (3-5 years) – mainly come from the SESAR programme. The SESAR programme is the technological pillar of the Single European Sky, the European Commission’s flagship project that aims to modernise and increase the efficiency of air traffic management (ATM) in Europe. SESAR spans from the ATM Masterplan, through to the research and development ATM solutions via public-private partnerships and on to the deployment of SESAR technology and procedures by airlines, airport operators and air navigation service providers (ANSPs) – coordinated by the industrial partnership, the SESAR Deployment Alliance.

Ivan Bassato (Executive Vice President Operations of ADR for Rome Fiumicino and Rome Ciampino airports) and Maurizio Paggetti (Chief Operations Officer of ENAV) spoke with Luc Laveyne about how the deployment of SESAR technologies is a great benefit to ADR.

How has been ADR’s experience in SESAR Deployment so far?

Ivan Bassato: We were only indirectly involved in the SESAR research & development. At the time of the set-up of the airport operators’ involvement in SESAR, ADR was not ready to step in and was not fully aware of the potential to deliver a better passenger experience through SESAR solutions. Now, instead, we are exploring any new possibilities to be on board with the major European airport operators in SESAR 3 where preparations will start in 2020.

For now, ADR is mainly involved in the deployment of SESAR solutions. For example, we are working together with ENAV in joint projects for Fiumicino Airport as well as in two joint projects with 12 to 15 other airport operators; in some other projects we are, instead, working alone. Content-wise, the involvement goes from safety, operations plans and airport operations centre (AOPC) all the way to IT, System Wide Information Management (SWIM).

The operations of the future will be focused on serving the passengers in the best way possible, based on shared data from all operators at the airport and from the EUROCONTROL Network Manager.

The SESAR Deployment programme has quite a significant degree of bureaucracy, but with the support of SDAG we are managing well. SESAR deployment has really brought stakeholders at Fiumicino Airport closer together for the benefit of the passengers, the operations and the Air Traffic Management Network.

How did ADR experience the joint proposals of airports (and some ANSPs) on surface management and safety nets as well as to set up Initial Airport Operations Plan (AOP)?

Ivan Bassato: Working together with 12 to 15 airports is a challenge but it is exciting and motivating. Airports, and sometimes air navigation service providers, like our own Italian ANSP, ENAV, must work together. At least in Italy, with ENAV, we are moving from working in splendid isolation, as was the case in the past, towards sound collaboration. Working together and benefiting from the experience of other airports is challenging as we know each other quite well from several ACI EUROPE lessons learned, best practice sharing and other collaboration projects.

In this way we have discovered an excellent spirit of cooperation. These joint projects – set up and supported by SDAG – not only bring technical and operational SESAR solutions, but also a wealth of

Aeroporti di Roma improves the efficiency of airport operations through SESAR solutions

Through the support of ACI EUROPE’s SESAR Related Deployment Airport Grouping (SDAG), Aeroporti di Roma (ADR), the operator of Rome Fiumicino and Ciampino airports, is participating in EU-funded projects that are deploying SESAR solutions. The aim is to streamline airports operations and, ultimately, offer a better passenger experience. Luc Laveyne sits down with ADR to hear their impressions of the work done so far.
In the joint project on Initial Airport Operations Plan, we have also implemented regular best practice-sharing in several meetings per year. We have the support of ACI EUROPE, who has set up a broader APOC working group to bridge the current status and the expected status in the SESAR solutions. This will be useful for other airports that will face the same challenge of deployment Europe-wide, would have been represented on an individual basis in SESAR Deployment. The projects challenging.

How does ADR rate the approach of ACI EUROPE to represent the airports as one group in SESAR Deployment (via SDAG)?

Ivan Bassato: The Airport Operators CEOs in the ACI EUROPE Board took the right decision to be in SESAR Deployment as one group and not as individual airports. ACI EUROPE has been successful in setting up a dedicated structure – SDAG – to support airports in the deployment of SESAR technology and procedures.

Certainly, in the beginning, in 2014/15, airports that were not used to European programmes would have found the process to secure the necessary funding for the projects challenging.

SDAG took the challenge to set up joint projects of numerous airport operators with some ANSPs. These projects, which require real coordination and synchronisation of deployment Europe-wide, would have never been possible if airports would have been represented on an individual basis in SESAR Deployment. The implementation would have been inefficient and more fragmented.

Also, in the future, airport operators will need SDAG to get the best results from SESAR Deployment and to maintain these good results in terms of information sharing.

Do you think that the revision and extension of SESAR Deployment might be very much about airport and residents?

Ivan Bassato: Yes, we are looking forward to the proposal of the European Commission regarding the revision of the SESAR Deployment Programme. Two pillars should be Airport Operations Plan and SWIM. The full Airport Operations Plan should allow all stakeholders on the airport site to act as one for the benefit of the passenger. In this way, we will move towards integrated operations of all actors at the airport. The second pillar should be SWIM, simply said the “internet” of the Air Traffic Management System. If we want to have a successful, cyber-secure, reliable and resilient data sharing link, SWIM will have to be at the forefront of things. It is a major step in the digitalisation of airport operations and the digitalisation between the local and the ATM network.

So far, only Fiumicino Airport is deploying SESAR technology. Does ADR intend to deploy some of it in Ciampino Airport?

Ivan Bassato: We are surely looking at opportunities to do it. Meanwhile, we have already installed Advanced Towers and we already comply with what has been proposed by the SESAR Joint Undertaking for the revision of the Implementing Regulation.

Has the SESAR Deployment Manager created an improved working arrangement in an environment like the airport where different stakeholders are called to a continuously improved interaction?

Maurizio Paggetti: The SESAR Deployment Manager has widely contributed to the improvement of the way different stakeholders were used to cooperating within projects. This is especially valid for the airport environment, where airport operators, ANSPs and handling companies are expected to deliver their services in an efficient and synchronised manner. A few years ago, transparent information sharing among airport stakeholders was almost impossible. Today, also thanks to the opportunity offered by SESAR Deployment Manager, ENAV and ADR have not only started to share information for an integrated operations management, but they also share airport systems. The example is the full integration of Multilateration system. The new MLAT system, managed as a completely integrated project, will be fully operational by 2020.

Integrated operations of all stakeholders at the airport will become the standard in the future. These integrated operations will be coordinated in an APOC. Does ENAV intend to join the other operational stakeholders in a joint APOC?

Maurizio Paggetti: APOC is a key milestone for the future, where all airport stakeholders shall synchronise all their activities in order to offer the best service to customers. ENAV and ADR have already started to manage airport processes via A-CDM, fully operational since March 2014. Moreover, a synergetic cooperation has been established to improve operational procedures, both in normal and in contingency situations. For us, this working arrangement is at its initial stage of the APOC concept. ENAV is supporting ADR in the project under the SESAR Deployment Manager umbrella to implement APOC at Fiumicino, involving all other airport stakeholders. We are confident that such a coordinated approach will allow us to design a centre where Fiumicino Airport will be able to deliver key services to its customers.
We are proud to be one of the ‘World’s Top 10 Airports’, and winners of:

‘World’s Best Airport Terminal’ for Terminal 5
‘Best Airport in Western Europe’ for the 5th year running
‘World’s Best Airport Shopping’ for the 10th consecutive year

Source: Skytrax World Airport Awards
Addressing the Aviation Cyber Risk Together

The total cost of cybercrime for 2019 is expected to exceed US$2 trillion (€1.8trn) – a quadrupling of information exchange on cyber risks and best practices on how to address them. Only close cooperation between all stakeholders based on mutual trust and agility can make the industry resilient to the rising cyber threats.

This initiative has led to the set-up of the European Centre for Cybersecurity in Aviation (ECCSA), a knowledge centre and information-sharing network that launched its “open membership” registration to eligible European-based organisations from the aviation sector, in July this year. During a nearly two-year pilot phase, completed in March 2019, the 12 founding members representing the entire value chain of the aviation industry in Europe developed membership criteria and a governance code outlining the purpose and workings of ECCSA.

The founding members – Airbus, Air France-KLM, Brussels Airport, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Republic of Poland, EASA, ENAV S.p.A., EUROCONTROL, Finnair, Fraport AG, Leonardo S.p.A., Lufthansa Group, NAV Portugal and Thales Group – are now represented in ECCSA’s Steering Committee, which will guide the fledgling forum in its strategy, policy and activities. The Brussels-based Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-EU) assisted with technical infrastructure and expertise as well as with the development of information products such as advisories, newsletters and threat landscape reports related to aviation.

Essential cooperation/partnerships that are being carried out or envisaged by ECCSA are with the following:

- EASA – European Union Aviation Safety Agency (acting for the moment as main supporter),
- CERT-EU – Computer Emergency Response Team for the EU institutions, agencies and bodies,
- EATAM-CERT – European Air Traffic Management Computer Emergency Response Team (supported by EUROCONTROL),
- ENISA – European Union Agency for Cybersecurity,
- US A-ISAC – Aviation Information Sharing and Analysis Center for the majority US industry and
- EA-ISAC – Aviation Information Sharing and Analysis Center for the majority EU industry.

The key purpose of ECCSA and main benefit for its members will be information sharing on potential and real cyber threats. ECCSA will dedicate its activities to the identification of potential risks, recommending pre-emptive protection measures to reduce vulnerabilities, as
well as to the detection of and response to actual cyber events when they happen. To be effective, this has to happen in an atmosphere of mutual trust and openness but also with the necessary discretion, taking account of the operating and very real legal constraints some members may be facing.

ECCSA membership provides access to the various fora for information exchange and best practices as well as to ad hoc activities. In addition, it offers feeds of relevant daily news for the aviation community and the general public. It also offers support to individuals that want to report vulnerabilities uncovered in good faith research activities (for more information: https://www.easa.europa.eu/eccsa/eccsa-request-assistance-vulnerability-disclosure).

Membership is open to all aviation related organisations that have their principle base of business in Europe and are firmly committed to the high principles of industry cooperation aiming to strengthen information security, safety and security resilience of organisations and travellers. Organisations can receive more information about ECCSA and the process to join as a member, by completing a short online "Expression of Interest" form (available at https://www.easa.europa.eu/eccsa/eccsa-membership-expression-interest).

Concerning Rulemaking activities, an important milestone has been achieved by EASA through the release of the following materials:

• NPA 2019-01 (Aircraft Cybersecurity): was published on 22 February 2019, with the objective to mitigate the potential effects of cybersecurity threats on safety. Its intent is the amendments to CS-23, CS-25, CS-27, CS-29, CS-E, CS-ETSO, CS-P, and, as applicable to their related acceptable means of compliance (AMC)/guidance material (GM), together with AMC-20. The amendments would introduce cybersecurity provisions into the relevant certification specifications (CSs), taking into account the existing special conditions (SCs) and the recommendations of the Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee (ARAC) regarding aircraft systems information security/protection (ASISP). They should also improve harmonisation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

• NPA 2019-07 (Management of Information Security Risks): was published on 27 May 2019, with the objective to propose the introduction of provisions for the management of information security risks related to those information systems used in civil aviation. These provisions shall apply to competent authorities and organisations in all aviation domains (i.e. design, production, management of continuing airworthiness, maintenance, air operations, aircrew, air traffic management/

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The European Centre for Cybersecurity in Aviation (ECCSA), a knowledge centre and information-sharing network, launched its “open membership” registration to eligible European-based organisations from the aviation sector, in July this year.

The regulation is foreseen to apply to all aviation stakeholders and is a first worldwide in its systematic and wide-ranging regional approach.

ECCSA is a clear example of how the aviation industry is working hand in hand to mitigate cybersecurity threats in Europe. Thomas Leonhardt, Fraport SB Member, commented "Today, cyber threats, whether they come from individuals, organised crime or state sponsored parties, have become a fact of life for every company and organisation. The nature of cyber threats is such that it is no longer possible to face them alone. With that in mind, I'm very happy that the aviation community is joining forces under the umbrella of ECCSA to strengthen cybersecurity and build resilience across the aviation value chain."

Gerry Ngui is Senior Technical Coordinator at EASA/CERT-EU.

David Martini is Senior Expert - Cybersecurity in Aviation at EASA.

Ansgar Sickert is ACI EUROPE Liaison Officer to EASA.
The 29th ACI EUROPE Annual Assembly & Congress, hosted by Hermes Airports, took place in Limassol on 25-27 June 2019. The theme of this year’s event was Transform or die – Airports & the Sustainability challenge.

The event attracted over 350 industry representatives, including CEOs from major airports, airlines, air traffic management, national governments and the EU institutions.

The Annual Congress saw the announcement of a Resolution formally committing the European airport industry to become net zero for carbon emissions under its control by 2050, at the latest. So far, 194 airports run by 40 airport operators across 24 European countries have committed to the same objective. The NetZero2050 commitment occurred as part of ACI EUROPE launching a comprehensive Sustainability Strategy for Airports.

Meanwhile, the 15th Annual ACI EUROPE Best Airport Awards were also announced during the Gala Dinner at the event.

Transform or die – Airports & the Sustainability challenge

29th ACI EUROPE Annual Assembly & Congress, Limassol, 25-27 June 2019

Next year’s 30th ACI EUROPE Annual Assembly & Congress will be hosted by Geneva Airport on 16-18 June 2020, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the airport.

Eleni Kaloyirou, CEO Hermes Airports, delivered the Welcome Address from the Host. “Tourism contributes 14% to Cyprus’ GDP, and it was the tourism industry which enabled the country to recover swiftly from the financial crisis of 2013,” she commented.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General, ACI EUROPE, addressed the state of the industry. “There are signs that the traffic momentum is fading for Europe’s airports. A synchronised slowdown in the global economy and significant geopolitical risks are combining with volatile oil prices, ATM disruptions and overcapacity to exert downward pressures on both demand and supply.”
Dr Michael Kerkloh, CEO Munich Airport, and Immediate Past President, ACI EUROPE, delivered a Political Intervention and also launched the NetZero2050 commitment. “Europe’s airports have been leading climate action with annual reductions announced every year for the past decade. 33 of them have actually become carbon neutral, supported by the global industry standard Airport Carbon Accreditation. However, today’s commitment brings a new dimension to this – no offsets. Crucially, with its NetZero2050 commitment, the airport industry is aligning itself with the Paris Agreement and the ambitions of the vast majority of EU countries.”

The Airport Leaders’ Symposium was moderated by David Feldman, Managing Partner, Exambela Consulting, with panelists including Nicolas Notebaert, Chairman, VINCI Airports; Monica Scarpa, CEO SAVE Group, Venice Airport; Dalton Philips, CEO, daa; Eleni Kaloyirou, CEO Hermes Airports; Robert Sinclair, CEO London City Airport; and Dag Falk-Petersen, CEO Avinor Group.

ACI EUROPE unveiled a Resolution formally committing the European airport industry to become net zero for carbon emissions under its control by 2050, at the latest. The pledge is further backed up so far by 194 airports run by 40 airport operators across 24 European countries, with each of them individually committing to the same objective.
The Third Working Session – Can Aviation Move Towards Net-Zero Emissions Without Sacrificing Growth? – was moderated by Andrew Charlton, Managing Director, Aviation Advocacy, with panellists including Hubert Mantel, Head of Environmental Affairs, Airbus; Bill Hemmings, Director Aviation & Shipping, European Federation for Transport & Environment; Andrew Macmillan, Chief Strategy Officer, Heathrow Airport; Patrick Ky, Executive Director, EASA; and Willie Walsh, CEO, IAG.

The conference concluded with the Fifth Working Session: Sustainable Tourism (Era of Partnerships). The session was moderated by Maria Kouroupi, Senior Manager, Aviation Development, Marketing & Communication, Hermes Airports, with panellists including Pukis Papademetriou, Manager Corporate Quality, Athens International Airport; Andreas Gerotto, Head of Commercial & Marketing Non-Aviation, SAVE SpA – Venice Airport; Lazaras Charalambous, Commercial Manager, DP World Limassol; and Savvas Perdios, Deputy Minister Tourism, Republic of Cyprus.

Next year’s 30th ACI EUROPE Annual Assembly & Congress will be hosted by Geneva Airport on 16-18 June 2020, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the airport. The official handover was performed by Eleni Kaloyirou, CEO Hermes Airports, and André Schneider, CEO Geneva Airport.

The gala dinner featured the 15th ACI EUROPE Best Airport Awards. The winners were Cork Airport (under 5 million passengers), Bilbao Airport (5-10 million passengers), Lyon-Saint Exupéry (10-25 million passengers), Rome Fiumicino Airport (over 25 million passengers). Menorca Airport (Eco-Innovation Award), London Gatwick Airport (Accessible Airport Award), and Hermes Airports (Human Resources Excellence Award).

The two-day exhibition featured a diverse mix of airport suppliers, covering areas including air traffic management solutions, airport luggage trolleys, asset management, automated border control, automated valet parking, digital solutions, engineering services, food & beverage, ground service equipment, and security services and systems.

Savvas Perdios, Deputy Minister Tourism, Republic of Cyprus, delivered a keynote address ahead of the Fifth Working Session: Sustainable Tourism (Era of Partnerships). “Only 25% of our four million tourist arrivals each year are in winter. Our target is five million arrivals by 2030, with 40% during the winter months, while developing all regions of our island.”
In October, ACI EUROPE's longstanding General Counsel, Gérard Borel steps down after a distinguished career in aviation law and policy. A renowned expert in so many aspects of airports and air transport law (economics, capacity, external relations, slots, security, state aid, privatization, ground handling and much more), Gérard’s 35-year career in aviation has seen him work in Montreal, Paris, London, Monaco and Brussels.

Olivier Jankovec, Director General, ACI EUROPE commented “Gérard’s contribution to the work of ACI EUROPE over the past 19 years is considerable and he has the admiration and gratitude of the whole industry for all he has done to advance the airport business, support our association in its mission and assist airports across the whole continent. Quite aside from the team at ACI, there are colleagues and friends across the world of aviation who will miss his expertise, experience and insights now that he is retiring.”

For his part, Gérard said “These past two decades at ACI EUROPE have seen enormous changes to the airport industry, especially here in Europe. It has been a privilege to be able to contribute to that, to help and guide airports through some of the more complex issues and in particular, to see how much more performant and polished the industry has become. The speed of change is accelerating and the coming decade will bring even more transformative opportunities. So, if I have a message for the airports & their teams, it’s this – Keep going!”

The role will now be taken up by Bastiaan de Bruijne. Bastiaan joins the ACI EUROPE team from the Royal Schiphol Group, where he has been Competition & Regulation Counsel since 2017. Previously, Bastiaan worked in legal practice at law firms Vatenfall, Bird & Bird LLP and De Brauw. He has also worked as a diplomat for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has an MA in Law and in Political Science from Leiden University and also studied at the College of Europe in Bruges.

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- 46 in North America
- 147 in Europe
- 55 in Asia-Pacific
- 23 in Latin America & Caribbean
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An interview with Eva Valenzuela, Director, Menorca Airport. By Ross Falconer

Menorca Airport investing to protect the island’s rich biodiversity against climate change

The island of Menorca is recognised by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve, fostering the harmonious integration of people and nature. This extends to Menorca Airport, whose entire culture, from planning to day-to-day management, is environmentally-conscious.

“We believe it is possible to carry out efficient and effective airport management while keeping it inclusive and environmentally sustainable, and we focus all our efforts on this,” says Eva Valenzuela, Director, Menorca Airport.

As part of its comprehensive sustainability strategy, Menorca Airport is accredited at Level 1 Mapping of ACI’s Airport Carbon Accreditation, and is working on soon moving to Level 2 Reduction. Carbon reduction efforts include the installation of a second photovoltaic solar plant on the roof of the general car park, which will be the largest grid-independent photovoltaic solar system on the island. Other measures being adopted to reduce emissions include the use of electric vehicles and charging points, as well as LED lighting.

The airport gardens house an ancient decorative fountain inhabited by the Balearic toad – efforts to protect the species include conducting a census and the tagging of specimens.

“Other collaborations with the local authorities consist of collecting fauna and taking Mediterranean tortoise specimens to the island’s rescue centre, as well as the capture of small birds of prey such as the common kestrel, which are removed so that they can then be released in areas away from the airport,” says Valenzuela.

Addressing UN Sustainable Development Goals

The awards judges noted that Menorca Airport is addressing a variety of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

“Two of the objectives that we consider to be fundamental for the sustainable management of our airport on an island like Menorca are Objectives 6 and 7,” Valenzuela comments. “Objective 6 assures the water provision, its sustainable management, and proper treatment and drainage, while Objective 7 guarantees access to affordable energy, which is also safe, sustainable and modern for us all.”

With regards to the scant water resources on the island, the airport has been carrying out a series of actions aimed at ensuring the efficient management of consumption: recycling water, protecting and restoring aquatic ecosystems, and improving the control system of leak detections.

“We use advanced technology to monitor our facilities on a daily basis, and thanks to these measures we have achieved a 50% reduction in our water consumption since 2012,” says Valenzuela.

Regarding Objective 7, the airport, together with the public authorities and some of the big businesses on the island, are committed to the 2030 European decarbonisation project.

Valenzuela explains that, to achieve this, the airport collaborates to reduce emissions through various actions at its facilities, focusing on the use of renewable energies, improvement in energy efficiency, and switching to electric vehicles.

“We want to carry on developing a strategy of efficient and effective management, so that our passengers, customers, airline companies, and users in general, are ensured a safe and high-quality service as they pass through the airport, which in addition is inclusive and committed to sustainability on the island, a recognised Biosphere Reserve. Our aim: a more sustainable future.”
Hermes Airports began a Transformation Journey six years ago, with the vision to be an Employer of Choice. It is a journey that has required everyone’s commitment, contribution and participation, and which was recognised with the HR Excellence Award at this year’s ACI EUROPE Best Airport Awards.

“The foundation was set in 2013 when ‘People’ became one of the six strategic priorities of Hermes Airports,” explains Natasa Iacovides, Senior HR Manager, Hermes Airports. “It was then that we set the goal to become an Employer of Choice, and our mission was to create a healthy organisation, with strong leadership and a high-performance culture, in which People would feel recognised, respected, and given developmental opportunities that would improve their personal and professional lives.”

The journey began with a Culture Audit, where the overall purpose was to capture the perceptions of the existing culture and involve Hermes Airports’ People in creating a new culture – one that would reflect its revised values, vision, and priorities. Based on the results, the People Action Plan was developed, covering actions in all HR areas.

“Since then, we introduced well-established practices in Leadership, Learning and Development, Communication and Collaboration, Talent Management, Executive Coaching, Wellbeing, Recognition and Renumeration, etc.” says Iacovides. “The introduction of these initiatives has supported our desire to be a healthy, caring organisation with strong leadership, outstanding results, and a commitment to providing exceptional service to our customers.”

Indeed, employee Productivity increased by 55% and the Satisfaction and Engagement level by 30% (4.14/5 in 2018 compared to 3.18/5 in 2013).

“Winning the HR Excellence Award is a significant recognition of our Transformation Journey,” Iacovides adds. “Accreditations with the calibre of the HR Excellence Award and the Platinum Investors in People standard signify that Hermes Airports is an Employer of Choice in Cyprus and abroad. Our vision for Hermes Airports to be a healthy organisation and an Employer of Choice is a key priority for us: it increases the possibility to attract and maintain more talents and skilled professionals, while at the same time enabling our people to feel that they work for an organisation they are proud of.”

**Establishing a shared airport culture**

For Hermes, learning is an ongoing developmental journey, and in 2017 the Hermes Academy was designed with the aim to establish a learning culture that supports constant development of technical knowledge and skills.

“New joiners enter the Induction Program in order to effectively assume the responsibilities of their role and become familiar with the corporate culture and core competencies,” says Iacovides. “As People progress, they have the opportunity to develop their leadership and management competencies, as they are defined within the ‘Leadership and Management Competency Framework’.”

Iacovides explains that Learning & Development has become a strength, scoring 4.21/5 where in 2013 it was identified as a weakness (2.9/5).

“The next step was to expand the Academy to the airport community as we aspire to establish a shared airport culture and collaborative mindset, where all stakeholders, acting as one, inspire our People to create an environment where customers can experience our high-level services and enjoy the warmth of the Cypriot Philoxenia (hospitality).”

In 2017, Hermes Airports established the Evexia | Being Well Program aiming to support its people and help them maintain a happy, healthy and productive life. Initiatives are offered based on eight dimensions of wellness: physical, emotional, environmental, occupational, financial, spiritual, social and intellectual.

“The initiatives include positive nutrition workshops, blood tests/health checks, on-site occupational doctor visits and massage sessions, parental coaching workshops including one-on-one sessions with a specialist, hiking and football clubs, the Employee Appreciation Week, and more,” Iacovides comments.

Looking ahead, Hermes Airports plans to introduce new and innovative HR practices to maintain the positive results and keep its People motivated, engaged and productive.

“We will continue our leadership development journey, focusing on agility, collective leadership and the creation of a self-transforming leadership culture, aiming to support our leaders steering the organisation through this complex and rapidly-changing environment,” says Iacovides.

She adds that focus will also be given to the Hermes Academy for the airport community. “We are confident that all of the above will be achieved through the involvement and active contribution of our People and stakeholders.”

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**An interview with Natasa Iacovides, Senior HR Manager, Hermes Airports. By Ross Falconer**
Menorca Airport
Best airport in Europe 2018
in eco-innovation

Due to its renewable energy and innovative solutions. Thanks to the efforts of all its employees.

Congratulations!
This year’s ACI EUROPE Accessible Airport Award went to Gatwick Airport. The judges were impressed by the airport’s efforts to go the extra mile to provide disability awareness training to all passenger-facing staff, teaching them how to recognise and assist passengers with hidden disabilities.

“Our aim is to be the UK’s most accessible airport,” says Tom Bartlett, Commercial Operations Manager, Gatwick Airport. “We know we still have some way to go, but the award is tremendously important to us as it recognises the time, effort and financial investment we have put in so far. This award is also credit to the work our passenger advisory group and local communities have done in working with Gatwick Airport to continuously improve. The involvement of the European Disability Forum in the judging also makes it a special award for us and gives us a strong vote of confidence that we are moving in the right direction.”

The airport’s recent innovations include a service for blind and visually impaired passengers to call where – using the camera on the passenger’s mobile phone – agents guide them through the airport, can read flight information, or even find luggage on the carousel. It is also currently trialling autonomous airport wheelchairs.

“In terms of facilities, we’ve invested £2 million (€2.2m) in a new ‘premium-style’ PRM lounge and we are expanding our existing range of Changing Places facilities, which include hoists and height-adjustable changing beds and sinks,” Bartlett adds. “It’s fundamentally important for us that all new facilities and services like this are designed in consultation with a range of disability and passenger groups.”

Ensuring consistent standards across the airport

Gatwick places a particular emphasis on training, with all passenger-facing staff taught to recognise a range of hidden disabilities. To ensure consistent standards across the airport, Gatwick also offers this training free to airlines, ground handlers and organisations.

“For example, 2,200 staff have been trained to recognise and help people with dementia across 14 different businesses,” Bartlett explains. “Staff at Gatwick’s special assistance provider, Wilson James, are also the only ones in the UK trained to NVQ Level 2 & 3.”

Last year, Gatwick became the first UK airport to open a sensory room for departing passengers in its North Terminal. The space is designed for passengers with autism, dementia, cognitive impairment, or other special needs, who would benefit from a designated place to help them feel at ease before their flight. Passengers have the option to transform the sensory room from a calming and relaxing environment to a stimulating interactive space full of light and sound with just the flick of a switch.

The ‘chill-out zone’ for those needing calm includes floor cushions, bean bags and digital display panels, which generate colourful visual wall features. The separate ‘interactive zone’ stimulates the senses through tactile panels, textures and a game to improve memory, motor skills and encourage learning. Feedback has been hugely positive and it is proving very popular.

“Passengers who use this facility describe the calming nature and the ability to ease stress while travelling through the airport,” Bartlett notes. “The sensory room has attracted interest from other UK and international airports, and we are now looking at installing a similar facility in the South Terminal.”

Looking ahead, Bartlett says the next step for Gatwick is to help ensure there is a consistent approach across all the UK airports when recognising someone with a hidden disability.

“We also want to ensure all staff, not just Gatwick Airport Ltd employees, are trained to recognise the signs when someone may have a hidden disability. In the autumn this year, we will also be creating our independent forum independently chaired. This will bring together industry experts and frequent disabled travellers to help work together and ensure we are delivering the best possible experience.”

The ACI EUROPE Accessible Airport Award aims to honour the best airport in Europe in terms of its level of accessibility, as well as the range and quality of assistance services offered. This year’s winner was Gatwick Airport. Tom Bartlett, Commercial Operations Manager, Gatwick Airport, spoke to Ross Falconer.

Gatwick wins ACI EUROPE Accessible Airport Award

The ACI EUROPE Accessible Airport Award was presented to Russell Guthrie, Senior Media Campaigns Manager, Gatwick Airport, by Christakis Nicolaides, President of the Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled, on behalf of the European Disability Forum.
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This year’s ACI EUROPE Best Airport Award in the ‘5-10 million passengers’ category went to Bilbao Airport, which was praised for its achievements in route development, PRM services, passenger flow management, the use of technology to improve safety, the variety of its environmental initiatives, and its cooperation with local stakeholders.

“Above all, it serves as a testament of our commitment to the community we serve by recognising the public engagement initiatives we roll out to actively engage with citizens,” begins Cristina Echeverría, Director, Bilbao Airport. “We are a small and modest airport that our clients use to travel to larger European hubs. We understand we may not offer the same variety of services or commercial offerings as these airports, but we are determined to continue improving.”

The airport’s proactive route development strategy has seen passenger numbers grow by an average of 8% in each of the last five years, with a 10% increase to 5.5 million in 2018.

“It is important to highlight the collaborative efforts that take place between the Aena airport marketing team and local tourism development and economic promotion groups to secure these new routes,” says Echeverría. “Potential markets and routes are studied locally by the Bilbao-Bizkaia Action Group, an air connectivity task force, in which Aena has a relevant role as the airport operator in the Basque Country.”

This has resulted in a diverse range of new and interesting routes for the region, including Vienna, operated by Volotea and Level; Stockholm, by Norwegian; Oporto, by Volotea; and Nantes, with easyJet. “Furthermore, we have been able to achieve other improvements thanks to this collaborative spirit, with more flights on routes to major European airports, and better schedules on the most profitable links,” Echeverría explains. “We have also consolidated the activity of companies that have chosen our airport, increasing the seats offered by Vueling, Iberia, Lufthansa and KLM — some of our long-term loyal partners.”

Engaging with local stakeholders

The awards judges highlighted Bilbao Airport’s progressive environmental initiatives. These include an acoustic insulation plan to minimise the impact of noise on neighbouring communities, and investment in energy-efficient LED lighting technology. “In terms of waste management, our efforts have been centred on the separate collection of waste, which is then sent out for recovery/recycling,” Echeverría adds. “We have an onsite composting plant that transforms all the organic waste produced by airport restaurants and landscaping into fertiliser that is used in the green areas of the airport.”

The airport values the importance of engaging with local stakeholders and local communities. There are several forums in place, including the Basque Country Airport Coordination Committee, the Environmental Monitoring Committee, the Wildlife Coordination Committee, the Easement Coordination Committee, the Air Connectivity Work Group, and the Emergency Response Committee.

“We are also involved in events hosted in the community we serve,” says Echeverría. “We are present throughout the process, adapting operational procedures to the specific features of an event. We look, for example, at the requirements of charter flights versus executive flights, the massive influx of fans in short periods of time, and intermodality solutions for ground transport.”

Bilbao Airport also works closely with non-governmental organisations in the planning of vacations and visits of minors with foster families in the Basque Country. “We strive to ensure minors experience a warm welcome and accompaniment from the beginning to the end of their journey.”

Looking ahead, Echeverría explains that short-term plans include offering bag drop equipment to interested airlines, updating the PA system, finalising the Automated Border Control project, increasing the number of available car parking spaces, completely refurbishing the indoor and outdoor signage, increasing the commercial offering with the opening of a pharmacy, and revamping the food & beverage selection.

“Our priority will always be our clients’ satisfaction, both passengers and airlines. We are a small and modest airport that our clients use to travel to larger European hubs. We understand we may not offer the same variety of services or commercial offerings as these airports, but we are determined to continue improving.”
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An interview with Tanguy Bertolus, CEO Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport. By Ross Falconer

Lyon-Saint Exupéry balancing growth, quality of service, CSR and sustainability

This year’s ACI EUROPE Best Airport Award in the ‘10-25 million passengers’ category went to Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport, which was recognised for its new terminal with enhanced intermodal connectivity and its state-of-the-art operational control centre and security technology.

“This is an important award in two respects,” begins Tanguy Bertolus, CEO Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport. “It acknowledges the relevance of VINCI Airports’ development strategy at Lyon-Saint Exupéry, which strikes a balance between growth, quality of service and corporate social and environmental responsibility. This award also comes in recognition of all of the airport teams for their active involvement and understanding of the importance of increasing traffic, customer service, and reducing the environmental impact of our activities.”

The airport saw passenger traffic increase by almost 8% to 11 million in 2018, and the trend has continued with 8.6% growth in the first half of 2019.

“Over the past three years, Lyon-Saint Exupéry has put to good use the expertise and tools of VINCI Airports to identify new routes with high potential and to support airlines in launching new destinations,” says Bertolus. “It’s a winning formula, with 21 new services opened in 2018 and a further 14 in the summer 2019 period alone. Growth of nearly 8% in 2018 is in line with the 27% growth in traffic over the last three years.”

To support this growth, the airport has rolled out innovative services for its passengers and airline partners. For example, its operational efficiency has been enhanced by the full implementation of Airport Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM), as well as creation of the only Operations Command Centre of its kind in France.

The awards judges highlighted Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport’s focus on a digital passenger experience. The world’s first outdoor robot valet parking service has been tested and deployed. “This innovation is developing as planned and has already met initial service quality expectations, with a 96% customer satisfaction rate and a reduced environmental impact,” Bertolus explains.

Meanwhile, the baggage transfer service from start-up Eelway is to be extended across all terminals – the start-up collects passengers’ baggage from the reclaim area and transfers it directly to their destination.

“The digital journey is showing excellent results, largely thanks to the ‘travel inspiration’ site, the information site (eight million visits), the online parking reservation system, the e-commerce marketplace, a website chatbot, and Facebook Messenger (1.2 million conversations per year),” says Bertolus.

Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport has implemented a similarly progressive approach to the environment, in line with VINCI Airports’ AirPact policy. It recently renewed its certification at Level 3: Neutrality of ACI’s Airport Carbon Accreditation.

“With a 35% reduction in CO2 emissions per passenger in three years, the figures speak for themselves,” Bertolus comments. “In line with VINCI Airports’ commitment to developing a strong local base, Lyon-Saint Exupéry has also ensured that its local area benefits directly from its development, by making it easier for residents of neighbouring municipalities to access job vacancies at the airport. Lyon-Saint Exupéry also supports local community and cultural life by funding more than 60 charities in the surrounding area.”

Under VINCI Airports’ leadership, Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport has restructured to become totally customer-centric. The digital journey is constantly being improved, and short-term goals include rolling out dedicated passenger journeys by customer type and increasing the selection of shops and restaurants.

The airport is continually developing its connectivity. Low-cost services could grow from a 40% to 50% market share. Meanwhile, the success of the Dubai and Montréal routes shows the potential of the Lyon region for long-haul services, and Bertolus explains that the airport is working hard to introduce direct services to China and the US in the near future.

“Our new passenger capacity, thanks in particular to the opening of the new Terminal 1 in October 2017, will allow us to grow without any restrictions in capacity in the coming years – few airports in Europe have this opportunity. Nevertheless, this development can only happen with a significant reduction in the environmental impact of our activities, as per the targets set by AirPact. VINCI Airports’ environmental policy. This is why we will be ramping up our policy to reduce CO2 emissions by making very ambitious pledges for the coming years.”
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Cork Airport wins ACI EUROPE Best Airport Award

This year’s ACI EUROPE Best Airport Award in the ‘under 5 million passengers’ category went to Cork Airport, which was recognised for its support to passengers with reduced mobility, its strong community engagement, and safety and security indicators including its recent Drone Awareness Campaign.

The judges also highlighted the airport’s €4 million investment in food & beverage facilities that promote local products, its recent route network expansion, and status as the most punctual airport in Ireland in 2018.

This is the second win for Cork Airport at the ACI EUROPE Best Airport Awards, having also won in its category in 2017.

“Anyone who uses our airport at Cork knows we pride ourselves on the smoothness and friendliness of the passenger journey,” says Niall MacCarthy, Managing Director, Cork Airport. “This is all down to the staff based at Cork who work round the clock 365 days of the year, through good weather and bad, to make that journey friendly and easy. This year we are Ireland’s most punctual and fastest-growing airport with eight new routes and 10% passenger growth year-to-date. Our excellent team at Cork will continue to work really hard to deliver a great airport experience and grow connectivity further for the benefit of business and tourism in the South of Ireland.”

Cork Airport is in its fourth consecutive year of growth and has an expanding route network of over 50 direct routes to the UK and Europe, along with daily long-haul connectivity through major European hub airports for passengers from the South of Ireland. In total, 2.6 million will use Cork Airport this year.

Rome Fiumicino wins ACI EUROPE Best Airport Award in ‘over 25m passengers’ category

This year’s ACI EUROPE Best Airport Award in the ‘over 25 million passengers’ category went to Rome Fiumicino. It is the second consecutive year that the airport has triumphed in the category.

Rome Fiumicino Airport excels in linking its operational excellence to its effective passenger-centric approach. The judges were impressed by the airport’s strong focus on innovation – such as the SESAR Airport Operations Plan – both in terms of technology and people management. The airport was also recognised for its safety management strategy, close cooperation with the airlines, continuous performance monitoring, clear environmental targets and active local engagement.

In particular, the airport has excelled in service quality for passengers, technological innovation and infrastructure efficiency.

The award was made possible as a result of having reached outstanding levels of quality in all areas of infrastructure and service thanks to “Atlantia Care” – started almost five years ago when Fiumicino was bottom of the table in terms of quality. In fact, the panel’s award underscores the outstanding results of Aeroporti di Roma, illustrating how innovation in technology and management can enhance the efficiency of operations and service quality as it has done with e-gates. These high standards have led to Fiumicino obtaining one of the highest rates in Europe for departure flights leaving on time. The judges were particularly impressed by the terminal’s efficiency and focus on managing security, as well as how it worked closely with its airlines and continuously monitored its performance and environmental targets.
Programmes like IATA One-ID and WEF’s Known Traveller Digital Identity (KTDI) aim at connecting travellers to airports, airlines and governments in a manner that is transforming the passenger’s experience inside and outside the airport ecosystem.

Seamless Travel home-to-home, the next chapter of modern aviation

One-ID and Known Traveller Digital Identity systems (KTDI) are reshaping and transforming the traveller experience by allowing a seamless traveller journey throughout the entire travel ecosystem. It is increasingly becoming the model for enhanced passenger clearance, flow efficiency, identity security and capacity structure.

Vision-Box passenger-centric technologies are leading this transformation by exploring the full capability and capacity of collaborative stakeholder networks. One-ID and KTDI are evolving the passenger experience inside and outside the airport through contactless biometric identification and Mobile ID technologies. These digital collaborations are reshaping and enriching the relationship between airports, airlines, governments and travellers all over the world, unleashing the power of digital identity for a safer and better world.

The Netherlands and Canada are two of the leading governments in this transformation with the introduction of a World Economic Forum driven initiative, branded as the Known Traveller Digital Identity Program. The trusted relationship between the 2 countries allows, for the first time, the secured share of citizens digital ID through advanced Identity Management as a Service capabilities. The KTDI home-to-home programme is a multi-journey, multi-tenant platform that allows travellers to use their digital identity for a contactless and paperless clearance end-to-end. Using fast and secure facial biometric recognition, travellers are automatically cleared to board the plane in one airport and cleared to pass through immigration on the arriving airport without needing to stop or show any travel documents. This gives passengers a quick, fast and secure passage when clearing the border on either side of the Atlantic. KTDI is a collaborative project between Vision-Box, Air Canada, KLM, the Montreal Trudeau International, Toronto Pearson International and Amsterdam Schiphol airports, and both the Canadian and Dutch governments.

Similarly, Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru, India, has started providing passengers with automated checkpoint clearance using the Digi Yatra ID Management Service Platform. It is powered by the Vision-Box Orchestra platform that uses advanced facial recognition for an automated recall of biometric and biographic data connected to the traveler for instant identification and clearance. This allows passengers to experience their journey seamlessly through check-in, security check, baggage-drop and aircraft boarding process. Digi Yatra’s system at Bengaluru is to date the largest curb-to-gate deployment of a paperless clearance system in Asia with over 350 passenger touchpoints available to the flying public. Vision-Box’s unique Orchestra Identity Management Platform is the brain that controls the complex data exchange structure under strict data protection rules. Its scalable design facilitates the expansion of biometric services throughout the airport by easily integrating seamless passenger processing points off and throughout the airport. The automated Orchestra platform takes mere seconds to check security databases, connect to aviation legacy systems, reconcile traveller data, ultimately identifying and seamlessly clearing passengers in a friction-less manner.

Orchestra is yet the only ID Management platform in the world which is Privacy by Design™ certified. It prioritises the protection and privacy of traveller data by default in government, airport, and airline networks.

Initiatives like One-ID and KTDI represent landmark achievements in the progression of seamless travel and markedly improve the passenger experience through digital identification technology. The digital liberation of the passenger improves the travel experience and connects the individual to the transportation ecosystem in a way never seen before which will help solving the growth challenges of the industry while delivering unparalleled benefits to society.
Vanderlande’s PAX CHECKPOINT combines the Advanced automated screening lane (ASL) with configurable Multiplex screening software. The latest generation of Vanderlande’s Advanced ASL includes features designed to improve both operational efficiency and the passenger experience.

“Fully modular, it can be customised to meet any airport’s specific requirements and integrated with both conventional and CT X-ray scanners,” explains Mark Elliott, Director Products and Partners, Vanderlande PAX Solutions. “The Advanced lane provides passengers with an intuitive experience throughout the screening process while also reducing the workload for security agents through the automation of manual tasks.”

Vanderlande’s centralised image processing (CIP) software also provides airports with flexibility as it can be configured for use with most X-ray scanners available on the market. Whether airports are screening images with traditional or CT scanners, or a mix of both, Multiplex screening software allows security agents to work with a single tool and a common user interface.

“This unique capability can significantly reduce the amount of training required, while improving the accuracy of the image analysis process,” Elliott adds. “Centralising this process also means that screening agents can be located anywhere on an airport’s premises to analyse images, which increases throughput and improves resource management. Analysing images remotely means that agents will benefit from a quiet environment away from the checkpoint’s distractions, which can have a positive effect on their performance and reduce the potential for insider threats.”

Vanderlande’s security checkpoint solutions have recently been installed and integrated with conventional and CT scanners in multiple airports worldwide. “An airport’s security checkpoint can be chaotic and has multiple sources of distraction for screening agents,” says Elliott. “Such an environment can hinder their capacity to focus on image analysis tasks and lead to poorer results in threat detection. Allowing screening agents to work away from the busy checkpoint with remote screening software can have a direct impact on their performance.”

Vanderlande’s Multiplex software is designed to provide a user-friendly interface and advanced detection tools to ease the screening process. Elliott reports that, at one European airport, the software resulted in an 8% to 16% increase in the probability of detecting threats, with a two-second improvement in the average speed of threat analysis.

Elliott explains that, as new technologies such as CT scanners and biometrics are being introduced to the passenger screening process, it is essential for ASLs and CIP software to be able to integrate with solutions supplied by various vendors through an open architecture concept.

“Both the lanes and the software should also be configurable to meet airports’ current and future needs. For maximum flexibility, an ASL should be fully modular, meaning that each of its modules is designed and assembled separately to allow airports to easily change, upgrade or add modules when needed without changing the entire lane. In terms of screening software, a CIP solution should be able to integrate with both automated and non-automated lanes to allow for a complete centralisation of the screening process.”

Vanderlande’s team of experts works in close cooperation with customers and partners to ensure that its passenger checkpoint solutions answer the industry’s current and future needs. “The modular nature of Vanderlande’s ASL and CIP solutions allows them to consistently and quickly evolve to stay ahead of new industry trends and regulations,” Elliott concludes.

An interview with Mark Elliott, Director Products and Partners, Vanderlande PAX Solutions. By Ross Falconer

“Providing an intuitive experience throughout the screening process”
EVERY AIRPORT EXPERIENCE SHOULD BE EFFORTLESS.

THAT’S WHY WE INTEGRATE OPERATIONAL SOLUTIONS TO BOOST AIRPORT PERFORMANCE.
Single Source of Truth: AODB drives operational efficiency

By Jodi Richards

For any commercial airport, operating from a consistently reliable single source of data is paramount to ensuring efficient, safe and secure operations, and, ultimately, driving customer satisfaction. An airport operational database (AODB) is the heart and central truth of operational data. It presents all relevant information in one place in order to make appropriate decisions as well as share reliable data with all airport stakeholders. Simply stated, the AODB is a "software repository in which all flights and associated information is stored within an airport," explains Fabien Betend of ADB SAFEGATE Airport Systems.

At most airports, operational decisions are made based upon data coming from the AODB. "It’s absolutely critical to have a reliable, considerable AODB because that’s the truth of information for all of the systems at an airport," says Betend.

Operational efficiency is highly dependent on accurate data and that includes all the information that impacts a passenger’s journey through the airport, including real-time flight and baggage information.

Behind the scenes, all operations, staff management and organisation are led by the scheduled time of arrival and departure of a flight – data fed to the AODB by the airlines. "Because all tasks at the airport are driven by the actual time of arrival and departure of an aircraft, the more information you have in advance about a potential delay, the more capable you are to meet the needs of the aircraft," notes Betend.

An AODB continually receives information from various third parties. For example, if there is a delay, that information is relayed to the AODB from the airline or air traffic control tower. Behind the scenes, the business logic of the AODB is looking for these changes. Given the available information, the AODB provides the "best known value" for the updated time of arrival or departure and pushes that information to all stakeholders. The more integration with third party systems, the better the AODB can predict an accurate time of arrival or departure.

"The idea is to give all stakeholders the same information at the same time in the same place with the same tool," Betend says. That includes airport operators, airlines, ground handlers, security, etc., so that everyone can make the right decision for the most efficient and effective operations at the airport.

As a provider and integrator of all airport systems, ADB SAFEGATE’s AODB offering includes resource management, flight information display, billing, baggage management, resource optimisation, system integration and operational improvements to ensure collaborative decision-making airport-wide. Relying on industry standards, the AODB easily interfaces with other systems. Its suite of modular solutions enables ground time optimisation, improves situational awareness in real-time and optimises movements of all vehicles and stakeholders on the ground, resulting in airport-wide gains on performance and efficiency by avoiding delays and flight cancellations.

Implementing Airport Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM) on top of the AODB allows airport stakeholders to collaboratively use common airport-wide data for more in-depth analysis and decision-making. The result is an airport that can operate more dynamically, thus increasing throughput, reducing costs and increasing passenger satisfaction.

For airlines, AODB offers better asset utilisation, while passengers receive accurate flight information, including arrival and departure time changes. On the ramp, ground handling crews are better able to allocate resources through improved planning, which can lead to reduced costs and maximised profits.

For example, with passenger traffic growing faster than airports can invest in infrastructure, turnaround optimisation is even more critical. Improving aircraft turnaround times depends on not only what is happening on the apron, but also how landside systems are performing, such as the baggage handling system. Having a state-of-the-art AODB that integrates across all aspects of the airport operation is key to that success, Betend says.

Similarly, this applies to the type of aircraft and number of passengers for each flight, Betend explains. The airlines provide the AODB with information on the type of aircraft that will operate for each gate – a larger aircraft means more passengers, which would alert the operation that more resources might be needed at that gate. "The AODB provides business logic so that each time there is a change of aircraft, it automatically regenerates the links between arrival and departure," Betend says. "This is very important for turnaround optimisation."

As the industry evolves, ADB SAFEGATE’s products follow suit and are continually updated to meet changing operational needs. As a provider of integrated solutions used in the tower, on the airfield and at the gates, ADB SAFEGATE, with its acquisition of Airport Systems, offers a total airport management (airside and landside) portfolio of automated and integrated solutions. Now, all of the separate – historically - siloed systems at an airport can work as one seamless solution, sharing data and applying data analytics to optimise performance.
Vanderlande is the global market leader for value-added logistic process automation at airports. Vanderlande’s baggage handling systems move 4.2 billion pieces of luggage around the world per year, in other words 11.5 million per day. Its systems are active in 600 airports including 14 of the world’s top 20.

The company focuses on the optimisation of its customers’ business processes and competitive positions. Vanderlande’s extensive portfolio of integrated solutions – innovative systems, intelligent software and life-cycle services – results in the realisation of fast, reliable and efficient automation technology. Meet us in Munich at stand 1120, Hall B5, from 8-11 October 2019 to learn more.

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Within the Securitas group, Securitas Aviation solely focuses on aviation security services.

"As a specialised aviation security provider, it is crucial to be at the ACI EUROPE Security Summit, to exchange views and information with the various airport stakeholders, and to make sure we understand what airports, airlines and other players in this market need, not only today but especially in the future," says Johan Gordts, Vice President Business Development, Securitas Transport Aviation Services. "This information allows us to offer our customers adequate and tailor-made integrated aviation security solutions combining knowledge, people and technology.

Securitas Aviation has launched several corporate initiatives, including workshops with aviation experts, exchanges and trials with technology partners, and in-depth customer events, to get a clear view on the future needs of all stakeholders. "These initiatives brought us focus and determined the scope of our market strategy," Gordts explains.

In this context, Securitas Aviation has had the opportunity to implement new technologies that have been emerging in recent years, including Centralized Image Processing (CIP) for cabin baggage screening and cargo, Checkpoint Environment Management, 3D Computed Tomography, and perimeter intrusion detection systems (PIDS).

"Although these new technologies offer advantages for airports and private security providers – not least the ability to track and review decision-making processes – they also bring challenges for the security officers operating these new technologies," Gordts comments. "Through our operations in Zagreb, Paris-CDG, Liège and Montréal, we have gained considerable experience in implementing and using these technologies."

Securitas Aviation aims to build partnerships with airports and other stakeholders in order to offer tailor-made solutions. An example can be found at Zagreb Airport, where Securitas Aviation Croatia has implemented a comprehensive security solution, combining Automated Tray Return Systems (ATRSi) and CIP.

"The new solution consists of three lanes, including parallel divest, automated tray return, CIP, and a comprehensive security management system," Gordts explains. "It allows for faster passenger processing, increased customer service and improved working conditions. Securitas Aviation Croatia takes care of the entire process, from design to implementation, and will continue to maintain the technology and provide the overall management of the security screening checkpoint throughout the years to come."

Securitas Aviation strongly believes in the efficiencies these types of technologies can bring, and has invested in preparing its staff to work with these concepts early on.

"Over the past years, we have been involved in various trials at airports around the world, from implementing automated lanes to the use of 3D Computed Tomography for cabin and cargo screening," says Gordts. "These projects have allowed us to investigate further possibilities and new ways of working, such as redefining the role of security officers. For example, very little scientific research has been done on how Centralized Image Processing affects the human factor. In collaboration with CASRA (Center for Adaptive Security Research and Applications), Securitas Transport Aviation Security is now investigating various CIP human factor aspects, among which is a possible change in rotation schedules with longer screening session durations."

This type of research, and the insights it brings, can lead to a whole new discussion regarding the effects of fixed positions and specialised functions on the performance and well-being of security officers.

Gordts notes that, although technology is gaining more and more importance, the human factor will continue to play a crucial role.

"People will still have to take critical decisions at specific moments in the security process. So, it is not only about installing technology, it’s about having a professional organisation with highly skilled people operating it. Furthermore, we invest substantially in our people through professional training and career development, providing them with the opportunity to continuously evolve."

Securitas is Platinum Sponsor at this year’s ACI EUROPE Security Summit, taking place in Tel Aviv, 17-19 September 2019. Ahead of the event, Johan Gordts, Vice President Business Development, Securitas Transport Aviation Services, shared some thoughts with Ross Falconer.

“Integrated aviation security solutions combining knowledge, people and technology”
What is it about the little red diamond seen on luggage and padlocks that can make life easier for airports and their security departments? Luc Cuyvers, Airport Coordinator, Travel Sentry, shares some insights with Ross Falconer.

Making manual baggage inspection simpler

Some 40 years ago, when John Vermilye was a junior passenger agent for Air France at Boston’s Logan International Airport, he faced a problem shared by US Customs and the airlines alike: how to clear passenger baggage when the passenger was not present. There were two options to do so. The bag could either be opened using a collection of spare luggage keys amassed over the years or by filing lots of paperwork and keeping the bag in bond until the passenger could come to the airport.

Though time-consuming, either one of these methods helped the airlines from having to break open baggage and making for a lot of unhappy passengers in the process. After 9-11, when the newly formed Transportation Security Administration (TSA) decided to screen 100% of all hold baggage, it was clear that these time-consuming methods would no longer work. In 2002, having just completed a stint as Senior Vice-President at IATA, Vermilye was selected to a ‘Roll Out’ team of 35 executives from various industries tasked with implementing the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. His solution to baggage reconciliation consisted of creating the most complete set of keys possible, collected on a large keyring by luggage brand. But he quickly realised the system could be much improved by developing an industry standard with a limited number of master keys instead. He suggested this to both the TSA and the Travel Goods Association (TGA), an industry group including most luggage manufacturers. The TSA agreed, but indicated that developing such a system was not in its remit. Vermilye, with his experience setting industry standards during his time at IATA, agreed to take up the challenge.

The Travel Sentry Passkey system was announced at the TGA’s annual meeting in March 2003, and by November that year every one of TSA’s 452 US airports had been provided access to the new master keysets. At the same time, luggage locks and padlocks displaying the ubiquitous little red diamond went on sale across the US.

Following its US roll-out, the system was made available to Canadian airports and subsequently to airports and security organisations worldwide. It is currently available to security operations in over 600 airports in 45 countries, with more airports and countries added regularly. The reason for its growing popularity is simple: not only are these red diamonds showing up on more and more bags (over 600 million by the latest count); having access to the keys to open them makes manual inspection, if needed, far less cumbersome for airport security and enforcement agencies.

Travel Sentry has set the standards for the lock cylinders, as well as the passkeys and rigorously controls the quality of both. The company licenses the system to over 500 lock and luggage brands, using the royalties to make the master keys available to airport security and enforcement agencies at no cost.

EMEA airports and security agencies interested in obtaining master keysets are encouraged to contact Airport Coordinator Luc Cuyvers at luc.cuyvers@travelsentry.org.

Cuyvers always tries to visit airport security departments requesting master keysets. “We feel it’s better for the people in charge of security to know who they are dealing with,” he says. “While we ask recipients to account for the keysets, how they do that – by signing them out of a central repository or by bolting them to the wall in the inspection area, is up to the airport. EMEA airports have different inspection procedures and we do not interfere. The point of the system is to make manual baggage inspection simpler, not more complicated.”

To what extent the keys are used is also up to the recipient: some EMEA airports will only resort to them as a last option, when a passenger cannot be located and the plane can no longer be held up; others are using the keys proactively to remove dangerous goods, thereby conveying to passengers that all those notifications about prohibited items are strictly enforced. It makes sense, Cuyvers believes: “Airports are quite happy with double-digit growth, but unless they start enforcing hold baggage restrictions, they’ll see double-digit growth in dangerous goods infractions as well. And that’s something no security agency wants to see.”
Airports are different to any other mass transportation hub. Hundreds of thousands of people coming from countries all over the world are processed daily. Within that mass, airports are faced with a variety of threat levels and significant unknowns. “Securiport uses the power of big data to complete the picture and allows airports and border authorities to manage and improve security measures” says Dr. Enrique Segura, Securiport President & CEO.

Border control and security is always a moving target with constantly evolving threats. “We are always thinking about what is next, and how we can innovate faster than those who wish to threaten us,” Segura explains. “At the ACI EUROPE Security Summit, we hope to share with industry partners how we have stayed ahead of the curve, and helped our clients stay secure. We also wish to learn from other success stories in the industry and explore how we can work together to keep everyone safe. These are truly new and exciting times in the airport sector, and Securiport is racing to implement its new technologies in a fast-growing and dynamic market.”

Segura is speaking at this year’s ACI EUROPE Security Summit, where he will discuss how airports can combine biometric solutions with big data analytics to process travellers more efficiently. “An individual arriving, or departing, is not just a person with a name and a passport. He or she is someone with a history of behavioural patterns and a digital record. By combining biometrics with big data, the complex calculations that used to take hours or days for officials to complete, are now delivered with the press of a finger, scan of an iris or the unique profile of a face.”

Data is constantly collected. Airports and authorities are implementing various systems worldwide to process the information of arriving and departing passengers. “However, if airports lack the tools and systems to accurately and quickly analyse data, it is of little to no use,” says Segura.

While airport security is, and will continue to be, administered by highly trained officials, AI-driven analytics will provide an additional platform to determine if a passenger could potentially be a threat. Segura explains: “Based on certain triggers, officials may be provided with information to ask additional questions. Is the person a potential human trafficker? Money launderer? Drug trafficker? Or involved in transnational organised crime? AI-driven analytics enhance capabilities to accurately assess the present situation.”

Naturally, the passenger experience needs to be taken into consideration, and the speed involved in capturing and processing data is key.

The future? Segura emphasises Securiport’s continued commitment to continue developing its technological capabilities as they strive to stay ahead of the curve. “By the end of the year Securiport will launch a new multi-year initiative partnering with academic institutions. We see it as our mission to invest in research and development to provide our clients with the best services and solutions possible.”
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The airport’s sustainability agenda – contributing positively to a better planet and AVSEC

By Panagiotis Kambouroglou, Founder & Managing Partner, Aero Iasion Development Ltd.

Airports need to plan for sustainability and define a strong business purpose based on it. Needless to say, airport operations are a complex and highly regulated affair. Therefore, a step by step approach is recommended.

The short-term: build up awareness
In the short-term, built up stakeholder awareness seems the most appropriate initial step. At least 10 out of 17 SDGs can be used to improve sustainability using technology, such as:

• Sustainability awareness training for all airport stakeholders and contractors
• Plan for AVSEC effectiveness
• HR management and internal communication
• Improving working conditions
• Upskill HR training
• Setting productivity Key Performance Indicators and monitoring them vigorously, etc.

The middle-term: sustainable operations
The middle-term vision should focus on operating sustainably:

• Sustainable facilities (eg bio-clima, lighting, sanitation, etc)
• Clean energy
• Effective and sustainable screening technology
• Multi-layers of security including bio-sensors
• Robotics
• Setting sustainable standards and monitoring results
• Data management, etc

The long-term: plan for disruption
Today, no sound prediction for 2030 AVSEC operations can be made. Disruption seems inevitable. Therefore, airports are called to plan for:

• Risk-based security approach
• One Stop Security, worldwide
• Use of open architecture security platforms
• Strong international cooperation of the authorities
• Connected and intelligent security equipment
• 0 min. queuing
• 0 emissions from aviation security
• Reskilling of security personnel due to the use of robotics, etc

Summary
The Agenda 2030 strongly impacts airport operations, especially AVSEC. Airports need to plan for sustainable operations and develop a strong sustainable business purpose. Human resources management is at the front line of sustainability to be followed by sustainable facilities and operational standards. Start preparing for business disruption and resilience, especially in AVSEC!

The author
Panagiotis Kambouroglou is the founder and Executive Director of Aero Iasion Development Ltd and has served the aviation industry for more than 20 years in several C-level positions. His vision is to support his clients in transforming their businesses sustainability, contributing to a better world. Greek-Dutch of origin, graduated in Law in Berlin, multilingual, in search of business excellence. During his tenure, Panagiotis was multiply awarded for business excellence and innovation. He is the founder of Samothraki Open Forum, focusing on the sustainable development and cultural heritage of the Island of Samothraki (www.samothrakipenforum.com).
Growing commercial pressures have created a business challenge for airport operators. How can airports continue to improve passenger experience, while simultaneously increasing overall traffic? Attempting to do so is a risk – any mismanagement of additional traffic will inevitably lead to delays and customer dissatisfaction.

With many airports already at capacity, and major infrastructural upgrades not always an option, often the only solution is finding new ways to improve operational efficiency.

Creating more capacity
Every day, Heathrow Airport operates at close to 99%, leaving limited opportunities for traffic growth. It also means there’s no room for error. Like many major airports in this situation, unexpected events like adverse weather conditions or mechanical breakdowns can have a catastrophic impact, leading to delays and cancellations.

Building new terminals or runways is one solution to the capacity crunch, but can be out of the question due to difficulties in securing investment or issues obtaining planning permissions. To address the issue within existing physical constraints, airports need to conduct a complete reappraisal of the operational models they already have in place.

Developing a holistic view of the operations is essential, and requires an audit of all existing processes and systems. This makes it easier to identify inefficiency and, crucially, where optimisation initiatives can have the greatest impact.

Finding opportunities for optimisation
Typically, the biggest inefficiencies exist at the intersections between different processes and systems. Many airports, for example, could do a lot more to improve integration of airside and terminal operations. By breaking down those silos, and enhancing integration, it is possible to create the kind of seamless operation that promotes operational efficiency. Specifically, any change that improves key elements like planning, collaborative decision-making and general situational awareness across the airport operations has the potential to increase overall capacity.

While optimising structure and processes should be the priority, emerging technologies are increasingly at the heart of efforts to drive performance. Greater use of Internet of Things (IoT) enabled tracking has provided visibility of the overall passenger journey. The insights generated by this visibility are helping to improve flow and the overall experience, so much so that queues are shortened despite introduction of more stringent security requirements. Automated technologies are also having an impact, with automated passport control now common in larger sites. Similarly, numerous airlines have begun trials of automated boarding gates in the last couple of years. Crucially, organisations are finding that when automation technology is utilised, customer satisfaction tends to be higher.

The OPEX model evolution
With sophisticated digital technologies becoming more prevalent, airports are increasingly looking to external experts for help overseeing their modernisation initiatives, partnering with external managed service providers to both assess existing processes and stay in front of the latest innovations. Traditionally, it’s been the norm for organisations to manage this in-house, but faster technology lifecycles are driving up capital expense (CAPEX), making this approach unsustainable.

Shifting to the operations expense (OPEX) model that managed service providers offer helps ensure airports are at the optimal point of the evolution cycle, while also drawing on the expertise of technology specialists. Moreover, this support helps ensure effective integration with legacy infrastructure. This is important – new technologies are central to driving greater capacity, but optimal return on investment depends on an implementation strategy that maximises the value of systems already in place.

While a root and branch review of processes and systems might not be required for every airport today, doing so makes good business sense. Most smaller airports, for instance, will not be operating anywhere near maximum capacity, but would still derive significant benefits, including greater profit margins, by increasing the integration of their operations. Technology is central to achieving this, and by adopting a service agreement approach, airports of all sizes can stay at the forefront of innovation.
West Yorkshire, with the major cities of Leeds and Bradford, is the UK’s fourth-biggest metropolitan county (pop. 2.2 million) and the region is home to the country’s largest financial and business services centre outside London.

The county is also a prominent leisure destination, welcoming 1.4 million international visitors in 2018 to attractions including the Yorkshire Dales and Saltaire (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). The tourism sector is now worth £9 billion (£10bn) to the Yorkshire economy annually.

Leeds Bradford Airport, therefore, delivers vital connectivity for the business and tourism sectors. Leading the continued development of the airport’s strategic commercial priorities, including airline partnerships, commercial offering and passenger experience, is Joanna Wild, who was appointed Chief Commercial Officer in July 2019. Her previous experience includes working for Thomas Cook Airlines in the role of Director – Customer Services, before moving to Thomas Cook Group as Managing Director for UK Retail. Since 2015, she has worked as an independent consultant and held various non-executive board positions.

“My first priority since becoming Chief Commercial Officer has been to reacquaint myself with Leeds Bradford Airport and with its operations from both an airline and retail perspective,” Wild begins. “Luckily, I benefit from knowing the airport well, having already operated out of Leeds Bradford in two previous roles.”

Indeed, Wild’s experiences at Thomas Cook were excellent preparation for her new role, providing a deep appreciation of operating in an airport and retail environment where security, on-time performance and passenger experience are key.

“I have also seen emerging industry-wide trends first-hand,” says Wild. “We’re undoubtedly in an interesting time for air travel as technology and customer tastes are changing fast. We are seeing a greater demand for an all-round, smoother passenger experience, which can be satisfied by investment in smarter technology such as enhanced biometrics to reduce queuing. Similarly, as an industry we need to improve our offering to a wide variety of passengers – whether that is an improved ‘grab and go’ option for business travellers or improved destination experiences for leisure flyers with time on their hands.”
Joanna Wild
curriculum vitae

Joanna Wild became the new Chief Commercial Officer at Leeds Bradford Airport in July 2019, reporting directly to Hywel Rees, Chief Executive Officer.

Previous experience:
2015-2019: Independent consultant; various non-executive board positions
2010-2015: Managing Director – Retail, Thomas Cook Group
2004-2010: Director – Customer Services, Thomas Cook Group
1996-2004: Head of Service Delivery, Thomas Cook Airlines
1993-1996: Airport Manager, Thomas Cook Airlines

"Potential for more transatlantic flights"

Leeds Bradford handled over four million travellers in 2018 and passenger numbers remain consistent – figures for Q2 2019 show growth of 0.6%.

"We are very pleased with our performance so far this year, and with several weeks left in the summer season, things are looking positive," Wild comments.

"We’ve recently had some exciting news from our airlines too. Aer Lingus announced an increase in seat capacity by 20% on its Leeds-Dublin route, and Flybe is increasing its Leeds-Southampton service by a third."

The airport’s proactive route development strategy involves working with its airline partners to develop the right routes, right schedule, and right aircraft for passengers. "We meet regularly to understand their requirements and business strategies. This is one of the major positives of smaller airports, as we have the opportunity for closer, regular collaboration."

Looking to the long-term, Leeds Bradford is focused on developing the capacity of the airport and frequency of routes, not just adding additional aircraft.

"These new routes are not only the popular sunny holiday destinations such as Majorca and Tenerife, but also cities across the EU for business travellers."

Wild explains. "We are also looking to tap into the potential for more transatlantic flights to the US and Canada during the next year."

Changing commercial & retail landscape

The airport’s 'Route to 2030 Strategic Development Plan' foresees annual passenger numbers increasing from four million to seven million by 2030. A major part of this is a £12 million (£13m) terminal extension – the biggest investment to date by AMP Capital since it acquired the airport in October 2017. This will provide an enhanced arrival experience including significantly larger immigration and baggage reclaim areas, improved departure gate facilities, additional retail and food & beverage outlets, and more seating.

"We’re currently progressing with our detailed design phase and we hope to share exciting news in the coming months,” says Wild.

The terminal enhancements will embrace innovative technologies to transform the passenger experience. Wild asserts that the future of airports is automation. Leeds Bradford already has a number of self-service systems in place, and is exploring facial recognition, enhanced biometrics and mobile phone connectivity to make the passenger journey through the airport as smooth and efficient as possible.

This approach extends to the commercial & retail areas. "Customer patterns change all the time, changing the retail and commercial landscape at airports," Wild explains. "As part of this shift, we are seeing more demand from customers for a greater ‘destination’ feel at airports. Naturally, I am excited by this and we are exploring ways to fully utilise technology – whether that is bringing online shopping into lounges or allowing customers to pre-book dining experiences in our airport’s restaurants. Both revenue streams – aeronautical and non-aeronautical – are significant to Leeds Bradford. The income that we generate allows us to reinvest into the terminal operations, benefitting all our passengers, partners and staff."

Another key element of the 'Route to 2030 Strategic Development Plan' is improved surface access to the airport, specifically enhancing public transport connections from Leeds and the surrounding region. Reflecting the airport’s investment in new facilities, a new Parkway rail station and three road access improvements have all been proposed to meet the region’s ambitions.

Wild adds that the development of the airport will not only further strengthen it as an important global gateway to Yorkshire, it will also provide passengers with a transformed travelling experience to and from the region. "For the remainder of 2019 and beyond, my focus is on working with my excellent team to continue to improve our passenger experience, introducing new brands and working closely with existing and new concessions."

LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT FACTBOX

2018: 4 million passengers
2018 passenger traffic growth: +0.6%
Q2 2019 passenger traffic growth: +1%

Key airline customers: Jet2.com, Ryanair
Number of routes: 70+

Top 5 destinations: Alicante, Dublin, Málaga, Palma de Mallorca, Amsterdam

Autumn 2019 Airport Business 53
Royal Jordanian Airlines has been a stand-out aviation contender for decades. Promising to be the airline of choice connecting Jordan and the Levant with the world, the carrier has most certainly had the potential to achieve this with a comprehensive route network. However, given its geographical location and strong competition from neighbouring Middle Eastern carriers, further fuelled by a number of new low-cost entrants, the oneworld member has found it difficult to grapple with the fast-changing aviation market amid intensifying airline competition. The carrier is changing this, through an aggressive marketing and network planning strategy to put both Jordan and Royal Jordanian Airlines back on the map to ultimately ride the wave of growth after years of fluctuations in demand.

Airport Business’ Mohammad Bhimani travelled to Jordan to meet up with Stefan Pichler, CEO of Royal Jordanian Airlines, at the carrier’s headquarters in Amman. They sat down and discussed a number of topics, including recent codeshare agreements, the oneworld alliance, and the transformation via a complete fleet overhaul for Royal Jordanian Airlines.

Pichler joined Royal Jordanian Airlines as President and CEO in June 2017, prior to which he held a number of CEO positions with carriers including airberlin, FIJI Airways, Jazeera Airways and Thomas Cook. He therefore brings a wealth of experience, skills and knowledge.

An interview with Stefan Pichler, CEO Royal Jordanian Airlines. By Mohammad Bhimani

Royal Jordanian: the emerging Middle Eastern carrier

Royal Jordanian Airlines has faced a decade of uncertainty with fluctuating demand on certain routes and profits tumbling, making it a challenging airline to lead. When asked why he decided to join the airline, Pichler responds: "I always try to get into interesting business cases, which are challenging. Royal Jordanian was a very special case, as it was in a very bad financial situation and has been for years. However, it was pretty obvious that you could do something with this company."

The Levant an important market

"I think for us at Royal Jordanian, we define the Levant as our home market. From the Levant to Europe there is huge potential, and this potential will increase because we will hopefully be able to open up more destinations," comments Pichler on what Royal Jordanian considers its key market. "Our network from Europe is quite extensive, in which we have 18 destinations, all of which we are serving very well."

Despite having an extensive route network, it is clear that dominating European LCCs Ryanair and easyJet are proving to be a cause for concern for Royal Jordanian, with Ryanair serving 18 destinations by W19 in Europe from Jordan, while easyJet serves five destinations from Jordan including London Gatwick.
The conversation soon turns to recent codeshare agreements and the announcement of an additional 266 flights for S19. Responding to this, Pichler comments: "Qatar Airways and Turkish Airlines both have a vast network and we believe that having a codeshare agreement with both carriers, regardless of alliance membership, will only benefit Royal Jordanian. Istanbul and Doha are two key feeder networks, and having traffic come from those destinations to Amman will further benefit us."

The initiation of the codeshare agreement comes soon after the opening of the new Istanbul Airport, which aims to be one of the world’s largest feeder hubs through the support of Turkish Airlines’ growing network. The codeshare agreement with Qatar Airways will also positively benefit Royal Jordanian, given the void left behind by other Middle Eastern carriers, following an ongoing political feud and blockade between the State of Qatar and neighbouring GCC countries.

Being a oneworld member has enabled Royal Jordanian to also reap the benefits of transatlantic US flights – the carrier serves New York JFK, Chicago and Detroit. Through the partnership with American Airlines, the carrier has been able to better serve the US market which it sees as its second biggest market, given a strong underlying O&D traffic stream and a large Jordanian population that has ultimately made these routes commercially viable for the carrier.

**Customer experience advancements underway**

Technology and innovation is a major focus for most carriers, given the strong competition many face. Pichler comments that, alongside a major focus on network restructuring last year which has boosted connectivity, there have been enhancements to onboard technology.

“We now have a new streaming service, which was introduced in June, that has enabled us to enhance the overall customer experience and connectivity onboard our aircraft,” says Pichler.

As Royal Jordanian moves increasingly to a hub-and-spoke model, Queen Alia International Airport, from which it operates, is not suitably designed for the carrier’s business model. “The airport in Amman is beautiful, however it has not been designed as a connecting airport and is not practical for our connecting passengers.”

Royal Jordanian plans to discuss with majority airport shareholder Groupe ADP the possibility of having its own passenger terminal in the future, which is better-suited for connecting traffic.

**Complete fleet overhaul**

In a bid to restructure the company’s business model and redefine Royal Jordanian’s vision, the airline is preparing to embark on a major narrow-body fleet renewal project aimed at improving the airline’s efficiency and overall inflight product. The new, more fuel-efficient fleet will support the carrier’s ongoing efforts to increase yields as its product improves. Pichler declines to comment on which manufacturer or aircraft type will be best-suited for the carrier’s fleet transformation, but announcement of its fleet selection is expected soon.

It is fair to say that the company’s vision over the years has been ever-changing, however, it now has a renewed leadership strategy and company slogan – ‘A World of Stories’ – which is aimed towards inspiring travellers to create stories based on their travel experiences. Royal Jordanian is moving in the right direction to achieve its core aim of being the airline of choice connecting the Levant to the world.
Prague Airport trials digital signage system in six languages

Prague Airport has introduced digital signage in six different languages at the entrance to Pier B in Terminal 1. The new technology is being tested until the end of October and if it proves successful, the airport is planning to install it in other locations as part of its daily operations.

“As the number of flights at Prague Airport continues to increase, so does the number of passengers with specific language requirements,” says Václav Řehoř, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Prague Airport. “The growing amount of air traffic calls for information to be provided faster and more efficiently. Therefore, digital signage is another project of Prague Airport’s technology development, which goes hand-in-hand with its construction development.”

The new digital signage system can be found at the entrance to Pier B in Terminal 1 and includes a total of eight screens. It responds in six selected languages, including Czech, English, Arabic, Russian, Korean and Chinese, depending on the specific locations where passengers have come from or where they are going to at any given moment.

The signage system provides much more information than conventional boards, including information on gates, passport control, luggage collection, and current weather in Prague.

Prague Airport is preparing other projects in the field of technological development, as part of its PRGAirportLab initiative. “For the second year now, PRGAirportLab has been focusing its projects with the help of modern technologies on five areas: safety, virtual shopping, mobility of the future, customer experience and a comfortable journey through the airport,” says Rehoř.

Gatwick Airport launches Facebook Messenger chatbot

Gatwick Airport has released the ‘Gatwick Chatbot’ on Facebook Messenger to provide passengers with easy access to information before and during their trip. The automated language-based messaging service provides passengers with flight information, flight specific notifications, and information on airport shops, restaurants and other facilities. For instance, passengers can simply type their destination, select their flight from a list and then receive real-time updates on the status of that flight.

At the moment, the chatbot understands and answers about 80% of the questions it receives. The airport expects this to increase to around 95% in a year’s time, once it has had an opportunity to learn from its interactions with users.

Plans are also in place to cover additional channels such as WhatsApp and Apple Business Messenger in the future to ensure that passengers can get answers to their questions on their preferred chat platform.

The ‘Gatwick Chatbot’ is currently available on Facebook Messenger, and plans are in place to make it available on WhatsApp and Apple Business Messenger in the future.
London Stansted Airport opens new check-in area as part of transformation project

Passengers using London Stansted this summer have been enjoying a new and improved check-in area thanks to the completion of the latest terminal upgrade as part of the airport’s ongoing transformation project. Eight new check-in desks opened on 11 July, with passengers travelling with TUI to Heraklion in Crete the first to use them.

“The new check-in area looks fantastic and received a big thumbs up from the passengers who used them for the first time on Thursday,” said Paul Willis, Business Change Director for the London Stansted Transformation Project.

The desks are in a ‘shoreline’ configuration which means that when passengers enter the terminal the new desks will be directly in front of them. The airport has also installed new white to black floor tiles surrounding the check-in zone which subtly helps passengers navigate where they need to go.

New remote check-in station now available for passengers travelling from Dubai Airport

Baggage technology and logistics company DUBZ has opened a new check-in station in The Dubai Mall – one of the world’s most visited retail and lifestyle destinations – to offer airline passengers flying from Dubai Airport more convenience. The service is available to passengers flying with nine airlines, including flydubai, SAUDIA, flynas, China Southern, Kuwait Airways, Gulf Air, Saudia, Royal Jordanian, and Ethiopian Airlines.

The station is located in the dnata Travel store on the lower ground level of the mall, where the DUBZ team checks in customers for their flights, prints their boarding passes, weighs and secures their baggage and ensures they are delivered to the airport and loaded onto the aircraft.

The station is located in the dnata Travel store on the lower ground level of The Dubai Mall, where the DUBZ team checks in customers for their flights, prints their boarding passes, weighs and secures their baggage and ensures they are delivered to the airport and loaded onto the aircraft.

British Airways to introduce reusable RFID bag tags

British Airways passengers are now able to take advantage of a simpler luggage check-in process, following the announcement of the airline’s partnership with ViewTag. ViewTag is a reusable, electronic bag tag that securely attaches to luggage allowing customers to take more control of their journey by tagging their bags before they arrive at the airport. ViewTag is equipped with radio frequency identification (RFID) and Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology, and a digital display that shows the same flight information as traditional paper-based bag tags.

Using the British Airways mobile app, passengers can check-in to get their boarding pass and synchronise that information to their electronic bag tag with a Bluetooth LE connection using their smartphone.

Richard Warther, CEO ViewTag, said: “By allowing passengers to transfer their information digitally before they arrive at the airport, check-in is reduced to a matter of seconds.”

Branded “TAG” by British Airways, the product is available to purchase at the introductory price of £63, while from October the standard price will be £80.

Recognising progressive ideas in action transforming airport performance and reputations

INNOVATION SHOWCASE
Outside In

The story of hyperloop goes a long way back to when sci-fi writers and visionaries dreamed of ways to travel at high speeds through low-pressure tubes. Today, this vision has come a lot closer to reality with the development of hyperloop – the brainchild of serial entrepreneur Elon Musk.

So, how does it work? Passengers or cargo are loaded into the hyperloop vehicle and accelerated gradually via electric propulsion through a low-pressure tube. The vehicle floats above the track using magnetic levitation and glides at airline speeds for long distances due to ultra-low aerodynamic drag.

Although associated with the founder of SpaceX and Tesla, hyperloop technology has been explicitly open-sourced and others have been encouraged to take the idea further and develop it. One such company is Virgin Hyperloop One (VHO), which is leading the way in these efforts and is working on exciting projects in the Middle East, Europe, India, Canada and the US.

“Just a few weeks ago, the Government of Maharashtra deemed hyperloop a public infrastructure project, setting it up to be the first-ever operational hyperloop system in the world, connecting Pune and Mumbai in under 35 minutes, as opposed to 3.5 hours. “This is a landmark announcement for building the Pune-Mumbai hyperloop transportation system, recognising hyperloop technology alongside other more traditional forms of mass transit,” Ryan Kelly, Head of Marketing and Communications, Virgin Hyperloop One, tells Airport Business.  

Redefining the end-to-end passenger experience

While today on-demand travel is still novel, tomorrow it will be an expectation. “On-demand, direct, autonomous – the VHO system is a mass transportation solution that can meet the consumer demands of the coming century.”

Kelly continues: “Rideshare companies have already disrupted traditional transportation by providing on-demand service in a matter of minutes. This convenience is indisputable, but it is still built around the limited capacity of automobiles. Imagine this kind of service integrated into mass transit: no traffic, no delays, and no direct emissions.”

From a passenger perspective, hyperloop is expected to enable a faster and vastly smoother experience. In the future, journeys would start by travelling to a hyperloop airport check-in portal located in the heart of cities. At the hyperloop portal, travellers would check-in for their flight, including dropping off their bags and undergoing security checks.

VHO’s vision goes way beyond the passenger experience. By connecting two distant airports, hyperloop can effectively create one mega airport. Kelly points out: “This is powerful when you consider that several large metropolitan authorities are building new secondary airports or expanding regional airports to meet demand, often well outside cities.”

Beyond its complementarity in urban transport connectivity, hyperloop could also replace some short haul flights, potentially providing faster-than-air travel times with significantly reduced emissions.

Opportunity or threat?

So, what does hyperloop mean for the aviation industry? It is, indeed, likely that hyperloop is going to disrupt short-haul and domestic routes. But Kelly insists that the opportunities hyperloop can create are what the industry needs to focus on. “We see hyperloop as a way augmenting and improving air travel – helping airports expand capacity by connecting regional airports into one mega airport and improving the experience of travelling to airports.”

With Hyperloop One expected to launch full passenger operations by 2029, airlines and airports have a decade to come up with a contingency plan and further explore the synergies that could be created by this technology.
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