

Assembly fails to deliver on cutting aviation's carbon emissions

The triennial assembly of ICAO - the UN's International Civil Aviation Organisation - finished in October. The eventual emergence of a resolution on Aviation and Climate Change failed to hide deep divisions amongst the organisation's 190 contracting states on how to proceed. The AEF attended the Assembly as part of the International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation, an umbrella organisation of environmental NGOs accredited with observer status.

At the opening of the meeting, both the President and the Secretary General had spoken of the need

- to examine more ambitious goals (going beyond the 2% per annum efficiency improvement already agreed by states at last year's high-level meeting);
- to develop a framework for market-based measures (MBMs); and
- to look at ways to provide assistance to developing countries.

Two weeks later, after lengthy negotiations, the Assembly closed having failed to deliver on all three counts. Many items relating to market-based measures (such as emissions trading or charges) and longer-term goals were deferred until the 38th Assembly in 2013 pending further studies.

In pursuit of more ambitious goals, the meetings could do no more than agree to strive towards the achievement of no



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net increase in international aviation emissions from 2020 (a goal put forward by the industry) in a text that is littered with 'Reservations' from key countries (A Reservation is where a state indicates it is not committed to the agreement). In that period, emissions are set to grow by over 40%.

Perhaps most significantly, the resolution makes several references to the needs, respective capabilities and responsibilities of developing countries. These reduce the prospects of achieving tougher, globally-applied targets and measures in the near future. This was despite an effort to appeal to developing countries by stressing that global goals did not attribute specific obligations on states, and the agreement of a 'de minimis' clause that exempts countries with less than 1% of revenue tonne kilometres (RTKs) from submitting action plans. Only 16 states (counting the EU 27 countries as a single bloc) are above the 'de minimis' threshold, albeit representing around 86% of international traffic in 2009.

Notably, several states including the EU, US and Australia, had

tried to set tougher goals for the sector with the EU recommending a reduction of 10% below 2005 levels to be achieved by 2020. Rather than accept the weak aspirational goals contained in the resolution, many of these states put down Reservations.

So what happens next? The resolution requests the Council to continue to explore the feasibility of a global MBM scheme through studies. However, it is now a matter for individual states to work out the most appropriate measures to deliver their contribution to the goals, and indeed, whether they wish to take more ambitious actions prior to 2020. The European Union has been quick to point out that the resolution effectively supports the introduction of the EU emissions trading scheme for aviation in so far as it recognises regional action and the ability to set more ambitious goals. It is likely that we will see many more national and regional schemes before a global mechanism can be put in place.

Tim Johnson

High Speed Rail vs aviation

As the government commits to building a high speed rail line between London and the north of England, German Railways (Deutsche Bahn) runs one of its high speed trains through the channel tunnel and Eurostar buys more trains, it seems an opportune moment to ask what impact rail can have on demand for flying and what this would mean for the environment.

A Deutsche Bahn ICE3 train visited St Pancras station on 19 October as part of work to satisfy safety regulations in the Channel Tunnel. If successful, this is expected to lead to direct services from London to Frankfurt and Amsterdam via Brussels starting in 2013. The expected journey time of 4 to 5 hours is pitched to compete with air travel and attract a million passengers a year. However, high speed rail's proponents believe that its pricing and on-board comfort and facilities can compete even more strongly as airports and short-haul air travel become more unpleasant.

High speed rail has certainly taken traffic from air where it competes directly between European cities in France, Spain and Germany and between London and Paris and Brussels. What about other parts of the UK?

The government has announced it is to spend £33 billion on a high speed rail line, HS2, from London to the Midlands and thence over two separate routes to Manchester and Leeds. Rail already dominates traffic on these routes so reduced journey times will have little direct impact on air travel. Direct journeys from the north to Paris and Brussels (of a little over 3

hours) and beyond would compete effectively with air but it is by no means certain that HS2 will be linked to the channel tunnel line, HS1.

It is for longer journeys where the impact of high speed rail becomes more uncertain. The high speed TGV from Lille or Paris to the south of France uses the old low speed rail network to reach journey's end but in the UK few of our lines are built to the height, width and platform clearances of the high speed lines. Not only are European trains restricted to our high speed lines but running high speed trains on to Liverpool, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow will require special provision through modified bridges and tunnels, and specially adapted trains. However, with rail journey times to Scotland reduced from 4½ hours to 3½ hours, airlines will certainly know they have competition.

Even if high speed rail can take passengers from air, what will be the environmental impact? Some argue that removing a short-haul flight simply releases a runway slot for a carbon-heavy longer flight which cannot be replaced by rail - the low-cost carriers are already offering longer routes as rail takes the short distance traffic - but at least the demand for new airports and new runways would be curbed.

A more direct objection is that high speed rail may not be



DB's ICE3 train at St Pancras - but will it reduce the carbon footprint of inter-city travel?

less energy-intensive than air travel. Where it scores, of course, is that it uses electricity which can be produced from renewable sources. An equivalent aviation fuel seems a long way off unless land needed for food production is to be released for biofuels so we can all keep flying.

Perhaps more troublesome is that, like airports, high speed rail lines can be unpleasant neighbours and a blot on the landscape. The government's plans for the new line have raised multiple objections along the published route to the Midlands, so MPs and Ministers are having to work hard to placate campaigners. No doubt more opposition will emerge when the government consults on the routes to Leeds and Manchester.

In an attempt to mute objections, the government has launched a blight compensation scheme for owners of property along the route. Those living near airports designated for expansion in the 2003 White Paper have not been so lucky and were left to the whims of airport operators.

High Speed Rail may prove to be an increasingly viable substitute for some air travel but exactly how much, only time will tell. The AEF will keep its ears to the ground as well as the air.

Roger Wood

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Night flights at Manston ?

An application to operate night flights to and from Manston (Kent International Airport) has been received by Thanet council from airport owners Infratil.

The flights would be mainly cargo. The council has said it would carry out a public consultation, expected to last at least three months.

Local people are very concerned about the imposition of noise where arrivals and departures fly low over densely populated Ramsgate.

One clause of the proposed night flying policy proposes that, if aircraft adhere to the preferred route of approaches from and departures to the west, the 'quota count' for aircraft should be halved. There is great concern that this is an attempt to alter a noise definition and thereby allow more flights than would be expected for a given cap. See http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/news/detail.php?art_id=4375 for more information.

Nic Ferriday

Deputy Director is a mum

Congratulations to Cait, our Deputy Director, who had a baby girl in August. Martha arrived a little early but mother and baby are fine. Cait is now on maternity leave until February 2011.



The rest of the staff have rallied round to maintain office cover and deal with the most pressing matters but inevitably some projects will be put on hold. There will plenty for Cait to do when she returns!

Cait Weston is now known by her married name, Cait Hewitt.

Helicopter problems

Noise and annoyance from helicopters seem to be on the increase. In particular there is increasing annoyance from helicopters flying at night and often circling around an area.

Many of these could be police helicopters on surveillance operations. Most of us do not object to the valuable job that the emergency service helicopters do e.g. air sea rescue and air ambulance, but we question some of the other uses that the police make of them. Complaints to the police are often met with the response that the flight was for 'operational purposes'.

Problems with helicopter noise differ from fixed wing aircraft because of the time that a helicopter takes to pass and the very different type of noise that the rotors generate.

Helicopters can travel almost anywhere in uncontrolled air space as long as they obey normal flight safety rules. Most operate using visual flight rules and often use roads and railways as simple navigational aids. In London this is mitigated a little by the provision of some helicopter flight corridors, but essentially any helicopter that

has twin engines can fly over the built up area as long as it flies above 1000ft.

What can you do about helicopter noise? Broadly speaking not a great deal because the same rules apply as with aircraft noise when they are in the air. Therefore, they do not break any regulations.

If problems persist you can try complaining to the operating authority e.g. local police, or to the Civil Aviation Authority if you think that there is a safety issue, or to the Ministry of Defence if you think that the helicopters are military ones. Having said that, finding out who owns a helicopter can be difficult as helicopter registration marks are very difficult to read.

The nub of the problem is that fixed wing aircraft are more or less tied to flying between aerodromes, but helicopters can fly, land and take off from almost anywhere.

The AEF will continue to lobby for better control of helicopters, but in the present climate this will take some time.

Tim Thomas

'Better not bigger' - SE airports task force

In the last edition we highlighted the creation of a new government task force on South East Airports. Despite its title, the task force is addressing issues at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted only. Consistent with the theme of improving the passenger experience within existing capacity constraints, the second meeting concentrated on reducing waiting times at immigration.

The Terms of Reference have now been published (www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/aviation/southeastairportstaskforce) and, in line with our intervention,

contain stronger references to local environmental protection reinforcing "the Government's commitments to a low-carbon economy and to reducing local environmental impacts of aviation, including noise". The task force will "Identify and investigate options for making best use of this capacity, including scope for improving airport efficiency, reducing delays, greater reliability and enhancing the passenger experience to, from and within the airport, whilst having regard to the local environmental implications of any measures".

Tim Johnson

Business Aviation: emissions that blow wind farms out of the water

Despite the biggest installation in the world, the UK's off-shore wind farm industry is no match for the climate change impacts of business aviation.

In Hampshire, Farnborough Airport has high hopes that government will soon sanction the near-doubling of its business flights, with an inevitable impact on global warming caused by yet more business jets burning fossil fuel in the upper atmosphere. Meanwhile, off the coast of Kent, the biggest off-shore wind farm in the world embodies the hopes of another arm of government to counter such climate change impacts by the use of renewable resources.



Just one problem among many is that a grant of permission for Farnborough would result in the airport's proposed ceiling of 50,000 movements (instead of the current 28,000) contributing to more greenhouse gas emissions per year than are saved by the new 100 turbine, £1 billion off-shore Thanet array.

From data in the public domain, Farnborough's equivalent ground-level CO2 emissions could then be expected to rise to some 444,000 tonnes per annum, while the Thanet wind farm saves no more than some 339,000 tonnes. (For details of calculation see AEF web site www.aef.org.uk/?p=1126).

Climate Change was the banner under which the Hampshire Branch of CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England)

contributed to the public inquiry, buoyed-up by a finding of Lord Justice Carnwath who, in reviewing a ministerial decision to allow Heathrow's 3rd Runway, said that government cannot ignore its own policies under the Climate Change Act.

The appeal unearthed some eye-watering facts about business aviation, mainly from the airport owner's environmental statements and contributions to the inquiry; not least that the average passenger payload for a Farnborough business-jet trip is 2.5 and that the equivalent ground-level emissions generated per passenger per return flight exceed the annual total for each typical member of the UK population.

CPRE Hampshire also found that the total emissions for 60,000 departing business aviation passengers each year would be similar to those for 2 million passenger departures from London City Airport (although the latter journeys are generally shorter).

We estimate that business aviation at all UK airports generates 1.85 million tonnes of CO2 per annum. With 25% of capacity located offshore, the UK's 5.1 Gigawatt (GW) wind industry proudly boasts of 'more offshore wind capacity than the rest of the world put together' (RenewableUK). It follows that 1.45 million tonnes (mt) CO2 is saved by offshore turbines per annum, insufficient to offset UK business aviation's 1.85 mt CO2 emissions.

Apart from the biennial Air Show, Farnborough airport is exclusively committed to business aviation, plus additional government, diplomatic and royal flights. It

Guest Editor: Nic Ferriday

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the Federation are as follows:

- to foster a climate of opinion which takes full account of the environmental issues arising from aircraft and aerodrome use;
- to promote a relationship between the environment and aviation in which the detrimental effects of aviation on quality of life and on the natural and man-made environment are kept to a minimum;
- to encourage wide discussion of the problems involved and to seek practical solutions;
- to consult and co-operate with local, national and international governments, the aviation industry, regulatory authorities, universities, professional institutions, research bodies, and any others for the purpose of reducing noise, disturbance and all forms of pollution by technical and operational means;
- to pursue these objectives with policy-making and legislative bodies - local, national and international - so that laws and policies include measures for effective environmental protection;
- to provide relevant advice and information to assist its members;
- to publicise and promote the viewpoint of the Federation through the media and through representation among bodies responsible for aviation matters as appropriate.

claims that business aviation more than pays its way in terms of the national economy. But would that still be true if the real economic costs such as climate change were taken into account?

This is an abridged version of an article by **Hugh Sheppard, Chairman, CPRE North-East Hampshire**. The full article, with calculations, is available on the AEF web site at www.aef.org.uk/?p=1126.