

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

Flying Green is published on a regular quarterly basis. We will consider all members' letters for publication, so do please send them in on any subject.

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Victory in the European Parliament

The discussion surrounding aviation and climate change was given a firm push in the right direction on the 4th of July when the European Parliament voted by a large majority to adopt the report of the Environment Committee on Aviation and Climate Change. The report was drafted by UK Green Party MEP Caroline Lucas who sought the advice of the AEF throughout the process, not least when she was personally criticised by aviation lobbyists seeking to undermine her initiative.

The report sets out a thorough package of measures to tackle the alarming growth in aviation's greenhouse gas emissions, going further than an earlier recommendation from the Council of Environment Ministers or the Commission's original suggestions. It proposes a kerosene tax on flights within the EU, 'with the possibility to exempt all carriers on routes on which non-EU carriers operate' – since taxing third country carriers presents problems. It calls for all flights departing and arriving at EU airports to be included within an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and, crucially, it calls for a separate scheme for aviation, where previously incorporation into the existing wider scheme had been envisaged.

A 'closed' scheme could be capped at a level that ensures reductions are made by the aviation sector itself; the industry, on the other hand, prefers an 'open' scheme which would allow them to purchase credits from other sectors to offset the growth in their own emissions.

The report is non-binding, but will send a strong political signal to the European Commission, who are due to publish a legislative proposal by the end of this year and must take into account the various opinions they have received. While the Commission may not go as far as the Parliament, we are hopeful that by 'raising the bar' the Lucas report will ensure it goes further than it would have otherwise have done.

The vote may well have spoiled Independence Day for US aviation enthusiasts, who are likely to challenge any scheme that includes their airlines (see ICSA report, back page).

PL

Editorial – head in the clouds

I recently attended a conference in Oxford to learn about the latest research into the environmental effects of transport. There was a particular focus on aviation, where progress has been made in understanding the non-CO2 effects on the climate.

Firstly, contrails have a far greater warming effect at night than during the day. This is because contrails warm by trapping heat given off from the earth, but during the day this effect is offset by the incoming solar heat they reflect – an effect that doesn't apply at night. (Note that this happens whenever the sun is down and a plane is in the sky; there is no link to 'nightflights' as in take-offs and landings between 11pm and 7 am.)

A second effect of contrails is the extra cirrus clouds they generate. Although there are large uncertainties, the latest research suggests that aviation-induced cirrus clouds could cause up to 10 times more warming than CO2 alone. This is alarming news, and as the well-established

'precautionary principle' states, we should not use scientific uncertainty as an excuse to do nothing when the damage is potentially very large.

But what can be done? The industry say that avoiding contrails means flying lower which requires more fuel and so increases carbon emissions. Happily, research is underway to limit this problem. As weather data improves, it should be possible to prevent contrails by avoiding only very small areas of the sky – thus having a minimal effect on fuel consumption.

Contrails are usually waved away – too uncertain, too difficult. But the science is beginning to show how the problem could be solved, that it is worth solving, and that there is an 'easy win' in introducing a scheme at night when the sky is less congested but the warming is greater. The Government and the industry need to get their heads out of the clouds and start taking this problem seriously.

PL

Review of London Helicopter Strategy

The helicopter strategy for London, part of the Mayor's Ambient Noise Strategy, was recently reviewed by the London Assembly Environmental Committee at a public hearing. Expert witnesses included the aviation industry, NATS, government, police and AEF. There are designated routes for single engine helicopters, initially designed to follow open areas to help emergency landings. Over the years development has encroached on many of these open areas. Twin engine helicopters do not have to follow the routes and have freedom to fly over most of London, except the areas around Heathrow and Northolt. The only stipulation is that they notify the London Control Zone that they are in the air. There is no radar control on where they are flying; they need only comply with normal rules of the air.

It was pointed out that there was no one place to complain about helicopter activity in the London area: local airfield Consultative Committees deal mostly in fixed wing traffic, and Battersea Heliport, the only designated helicopter base in London, handling much of the commercial and military traffic (but not the significant police or ambulance operations), does not have a consultative committee. The committee was asked to look at setting up a London-wide complaints procedure, possibly operated on similar lines to an airfield consultative committee. The committee also looked at an alternative, more environmentally acceptable site for a heliport to replace Battersea. The AEF was concerned that the industry should not be given the green light to put in multiple heliport planning applications as happened in the 1990's.

TT

Aviation policy needs a *rethink!*

A new campaign was launched in June by AirportWatch, the sister organisation of AEF, calling on the Government to carry out a fundamental *rethink!* of the Aviation White Paper, instead of the mere progress report it is due to publish this year. The enclosed leaflet gives more details, and further copies are available on request.

The campaign was launched with prominent adverts in national newspapers and a letter from leading environmentalists, scientists, and politicians from across the parties. The aim is to build up pressure on the Government by encouraging the public to write to the Secretary of State for Transport. There's been a great response so far: over 2,300 people have sent a letter or an e-mail, but we hope for 5,000 – so we need your help!

Please log on to the website www.airportwatch.org.uk and follow the links – there's a suggested letter but feel free to change it, particularly in order to highlight the negative impacts that airport development is having in your local area.

You can either print the letter out and post it yourself, or if you only have two minutes, you can send an e-mail. If you don't have access to the internet, you can write to

Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

Don't forget to mention the *rethink!* campaign.

Why is this so important? Well, the 2003 White Paper set out a massive programme of expansion to cater for a near trebling of passengers by 2030. If the proposals it contains become reality, they would:

- Wreck targets to combat climate change: aviation is set to take up our entire 'safe' allowance of carbon within 30-40 years;
- Expose thousands more to aircraft noise: currently around 450,000 people live with average noise of over 57 decibels, and the number is set to rise to 650,000;
- Worsen congestion and air pollution around airports;
- Threaten the character and tranquillity of the countryside, as well as destroying ancient woodland and heritage sites where new runways are planned.

AEF is campaigning on your behalf to make sure these environmental disasters don't happen. We hold meetings with civil servants, and recently gave a presentation to the Department for Transport outlining how we expect them to deal with the environmental targets that are in the White Paper.

But we need Ministers to be asking civil servants to strengthen environmental policies, and to put pressure on Ministers, we need the public to write in their thousands demanding a *rethink!* So please – send the letter, and spread the word – local groups can help by informing their members via websites and newsletters.

Electronic copies of Flying Green

Sending out Flying Green by e-mail rather than by post saves the AEF time and money. That said, we appreciate that not everyone has access to the internet, and some may simply prefer to read a paper copy. If you would prefer an electronic copy, or would like an electronic copy in addition to your paper copy, please contact Peter Lockley by e-mailing pete@aef.org.uk and he will be happy to arrange this for you.

Airport in Focus – Farnborough

In October last year TAG Aviation, the operator of Farnborough airport, applied to double the number of weekend movements on the grounds that this was necessary to meet customer demand. The application generated an unprecedented level of opposition from the public as well from statutory consultees. Nearly 2,000 letters of objection, many from local residents, were submitted to the Planning Authority. An equally impressive number of objections were submitted following a second round of consultation.

This response could not be ignored and the Local Authority Planning Committee had little choice but to refuse the application. Although the official grounds for the refusal were that the operator had failed to make the economic case for expansion, there is no doubt that the scale of the public's reaction was the deciding factor.

This success was due to effective targeting of the communities most affected with two key messages: First, that TAG had invested in unnecessarily opulent facilities and only had itself to blame if it now had financial problems. The second was that the supposed economic benefits from the change clearly did not outweigh the environmental disbenefits.

Although a victory has been won, the pressure for growth remains. Still, it is significant that the Local Authority has not accepted the argument that TAG's commercial viability is not synonymous with the future of the airport. TAG, like any other company, must be subject commercial disciplines. If protected by the planning system, TAG is likely to inflate its economic case and residents will be obliged to pay an increasing price through the continuing degradation of their environment.

Geoff Marks

The AEF relies on membership fees and donations. If you are interested in making a donation, please contact the office. One effective way to donate is by a legacy - all property above £263,000 (including the value of your house) is subject to 40% Inheritance Tax. Charitable donations, however, are exempt. For more details see www.remembercharity.org.uk

Stop press ...

NIGHT FLIGHTS: As *Flying Green* went to press, the AEF learnt that the Government has backed down on the issue of the infamous 'night flights' clause of the Civil Aviation Bill, after the Lords insisted for a second time on removing it. The law will therefore continue to require the setting of a movements cap as well as a 'noise quota' limit. This unexpected reversal represents a major victory for residents at the London airports.

MORI POLL: An opinion poll carried out for the Airfields Environment Trust has revealed that the public overwhelmingly back policies to slow the growth in air travel, and accept that this will mean paying more for flights. This was true across all age, income and regional groupings, and even among the 50% of respondents who were given no information about the topic, a majority backed demand restraint. Electronic copies of the poll results are available on request.



As well as launching the *rethink!* campaign, AirportWatch held a successful conference in York in May which brought together campaigners from around the country to discuss tactics and share their experiences. More news can be found on the website (www.airportwatch.org.uk) or by phoning Sarah at the AEF office on 020 7248 2227.

ICSA – the International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation

The annual steering group meeting of ICAO's Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection could not reconcile the diverging views of the Europe and the rest of the world on whether an emissions trading scheme can unilaterally include carriers from other countries. The matter will be referred to a higher level, ICAO's Council, but this issue looks set to dominate discussions in the lead up to the next Assembly in 2007. Europe hopes to persuade other states that it would be discriminatory to include certain carriers operating on a route in a trading scheme and not others.

Editor: Peter Lockley

Published by: Aviation Environment Federation, Broken Wharf House, London EC4V 3DT

t: 020 7248 2223 w: www.aef.org.uk e: info@aef.org.uk f: 020 7329 8160