

# Exchange



## Newsletter for Aviation Campaigners across Europe

No 2

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### About Exchange

I will be compiling Exchange every two months in my capacity President of UECNA (European Union Against Aircraft Noise) but it will be emailed to all campaigners whether or not they are members of UECNA. Please free to email to other campaigners and campaign groups you may know. We want it to reach as many people as possible. If you do not want to receive Exchange please let me know and I will take you off the mailing list. .

**John Stewart**

### European Directives

One of the ways the European Union (EU) makes policy is through the use of Directives. A directive is drawn up by the civil servants in the European Commission. It is then discussed by the European Parliament. Finally, it goes to the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers consists of government ministers from each of the EU countries. They make the final decision about all directives. Directives are usually revised about every five years.

**Over the next 18 months there will be a number of directives that affect aviation which we can influence:**

- The consultation on the **VAT Directive** (Value Added Tax) ended on 31<sup>st</sup> May. A number of aviation campaign groups responded to it. In most countries there is no VAT on airline tickets or on the purchase on new planes. This subsidy to the aviation industry is one reason why air fares can be so cheap, leading to a big increase in the number of planes in the air. UECNA is calling for aviation to pay VAT. A number of you responded to the consultation. ***There will be another opportunity to lobby for VAT when the Directive goes to the European Parliament. We will let you know when that will be happening***
- The European Commission published its draft revised **Energy Taxation Directive** on 13<sup>th</sup> April. It now goes to the European Parliament to be discussed. It contains no plans for the European Union to impose tax on aircraft fuel. This is very disappointing, particularly since the Commissioner, Algirdas Semeta, stresses the need to tax unsustainable industries. More details of the proposals: [http://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/taxation/excise\\_duties/energy\\_products/legislation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/excise_duties/energy_products/legislation/index_en.htm)

**Action to take!** The part of the European Commission which is responsible for the consultation is the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union. We can send our emails to the Commissioner in charge of the Directorate, Algirdas Semeta ([cab-semeta-commissaire@ec.europa.eu](mailto:cab-semeta-commissaire@ec.europa.eu)). The main official in charge of energy taxes is

Rolf Diemer ([rolf.diemer@ec.europa.eu](mailto:rolf.diemer@ec.europa.eu)). The proposals will be considered by the European Parliament's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs. Here is the link to the list of members on the Committee and their email addresses: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/membersCom.do?jsessionid=518A5C8F6F7A5B603D7F45D1C076EEEE.node2?language=EN&body=ECON>. Its Chair is Sharon Bowles ([Sharon.bowles@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:Sharon.bowles@europarl.europa.eu)). I suggest you email her and the MEPs from your own countries. You can email all members of the Committee if you want!

- There is news about the **Noise Directives**. There are two noise directives. Directive 2002/30 only deals with noise from aircraft at airports. Directive 2002/49 deals with noise from all other sources. This month the European Commission will publish proposals on whether or not Directive 2002/49 should be revised. It will be asking the views of the European Governments. In September or October it will be holding what it calls 'Stakeholder Forums' followed by an online consultation. The Commission will assess all the views it has heard. It will then decide whether or not to revise Directive 2002/49. In September the Commission will publish proposal on whether or not to revise the airports directive, 2002/30.

**Action to take!** We have one simple demand. We want the EU to include noise targets in both directives and a timetable by which they should be met. Without these targets and timetables governments are unlikely to do much to improve the noise climate. Write to your own government. Write to the EU Environment Commissioner, Janez Potocnik – [janez.potocnick@ec.europa.eu](mailto:janez.potocnick@ec.europa.eu) and the Director of Sustainable Resources, Management, Industry and Air, Soledad Blanco – [soledad.blanco@ec.europa.eu](mailto:soledad.blanco@ec.europa.eu) as well as the Chair of the Parliament's Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee Jo Leinen – [jo.leinen@ec.europa.eu](mailto:jo.leinen@ec.europa.eu). I suggest you write to all the MEPs from your own country on the committee – <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/membersCom.do?language=EN&body=ENVI>. As far as the airports directive is concerned you need to contact the Transport Commissioner Brian Simpson – [brian.simpson@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:brian.simpson@europarl.europa.eu). Again, it is worth emailing all the MEPs from your own country on the committee – <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/membersCom.do?language=EN&body=TRAN>.

### **What to say in your emails**

**Below is a sample letter you could use in all the responses and letters you write. But feel free to adapt it as you want or to write your own letter!**

The Commission is currently deciding whether to revise its noise directives - Directive 2002/30 only deals with noise from aircraft at airports. Directive 2002/49 deals with noise from all other sources. We are writing to you to ask you to support the introduction of noise targets in the noise directives, which the Commission is currently deciding whether to revise, and clear timetables for their implementation. The governments of member states will only take noise seriously if they are required to meet noise targets by a particular date. We suggest that the Directive should use the noise levels recommended by the World Health Organisation as their targets.

Day-time targets: <http://www.who.int/docstore/peh/noise/guidelines2.html>  
<http://www.who.int/docstore/peh/noise/bruit.htm>

Night noise targets: [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/43316/E92845.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/43316/E92845.pdf)

### **European airports could fly 28 million more without expanding**

Europe's busiest airports could carry 28 million more passengers every year without further expansion or extra runways, according to a report. The study, ordered by the European commission, said more efficient use of take-off and landing slots could absorb some congestion. Demand already exceeds capacity most or all of the day at six European airports – Heathrow, Gatwick, Paris Orly, Milan Linate, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt. Some major European airports were planning to expand and may be able to cope with increases but others were not and faced worsening "capacity constraints" the report said. There are currently 26,000 flights using Europe's airspace every day. EU transport commissioner, Siim Kallas, said: "We have been concerned that the current system of allocating takeoff and landing slots at airports is inefficient, giving rise to delays and congestion. This has now been confirmed by today's report, showing that up to 28 million more passengers could travel each year through Europe's airports." The Commissioner said he intended to propose legislation this year to tackle the issue.

#### **Our concern**

The concern for residents living under flight paths is that the number of planes will continue to increase. We have had some success in stopping new runways. Heathrow is probably the best example of this. But it is more difficult to stop the slow increase in the number of flights using our airports. This is the biggest change now facing us. Our best chance of doing so is probably through the price of flying going up if aviation is forced to pay tax on its fuel and is charged VAT. That is why it is so important to lobby the European Union to try to make sure this happens.

### **A Visit to Barcelona**

I visited the campaign group in Barcelona in May. Prou Soroll held a press conference in Barcelona city centre to launch a complaint they hope to bring to the European Commission and to highlight their suffering: a plane every few minutes. The planes using the airport avoid flying over much of the city but they are a big problem for many the residents living in communities close to the sea.

The number of planes using the airport has grown significantly in recent years. It is due to the increase in low-cost tourist flights and the fact that Barcelona has now flights to many more destinations than in the past. The increase in flights at Barcelona has been part of the huge building programme that has taken place in Spain over the past few decades. Airports have grown, motorways have been built and a new high-speed rail line has been constructed. Even now, the Government wants to double the present capacity of the country's airports. This rush to build transport infrastructure was due to a belief that Spain had to catch up with other Western countries. The result is that Spain now has more motorways than any other European country. Motorway kilometers rose from 2,000 in 1982 to 14,000 today. A lot of the new infrastructure was paid for by money from the European Commission.

Organisations such Ecologistas en action, a leading network of environmental groups, hope things might start to change. The European money is more difficult to get, oil prices are rising and all this infrastructure has done little to assist the unemployed youth who are demonstrating in towns and cities across the country. Linking up with organizations such as Ecologistas en action might well be a good move for Prou Soroll in its fight to cut aircraft noise in Barcelona.

## **Tell us your news!**

**Each newsletter will have a section about what is happening in the different campaigns in the different countries around Europe.**

- Let us know what is happening at your airports
- Send us information about events you are holding or campaigns you are doing
- Tell us about your successes.....and failures!
- Make this newsletter a real exchange of information

**Also send you material to the UECNA website: [www.uecna.eu](http://www.uecna.eu) email JP Pago on [jp.pago@free.fr](mailto:jp.pago@free.fr)**

**If you want to be able to track the flight paths in your area, UECNA can help. Look at [www.dfld.de](http://www.dfld.de) or email Horst Weise on [mail@DFLD.de](mailto:mail@DFLD.de)**

### **Two very useful websites:**

- Transport and Environment (T & E): <http://www.transportenvironment.org/>
- European Environmental Bureau (EEB): <http://www.eeb.org/>

### **UECNA On-line Library**

UECNA is setting up an online library where we can all access reports, campaign materials and useful information. We all have a lot of material that would be useful for other campaigners. Email me if you want to put anything on to the online library.

### **Campaigning and Information Sheets**

Over the next few months UECNA will be publishing short campaigning and briefing sheets to assist organizations with their campaigning.

### **Finally, here's a video about biofuels**

The aviation industry is hoping biofuels might, in part, replace kerosene. But biofuels might simply end up being grown on land in poorer countries with disastrous results... <http://www.transportenvironment.org/News/2011/5/Peter-and-Jane-A-Short-Film-about-Biofuels/>

**If you have videos you want to share, email them to [johnstewart@btconnect.com](mailto:johnstewart@btconnect.com)**

**This newsletter has been published by UECNA.** We are a network of almost 40 airport community campaign groups across Europe. Our main concern is the noise for residents living around the airports and under the flight paths. We have regular meetings, organize conferences and take part in marches, demonstrations and other visible activities. We also lobby the European Parliament and the European Commission. To find out more visit our website: [www.uecna.eu](http://www.uecna.eu) If your group is interested in joining UECNA email [johnstewart2@btconnect.com](mailto:johnstewart2@btconnect.com)