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MANAGEMENT, OWNERSHIP & FINANCE

EUROPE

Pärnu Airport (Estonia) faces calls for privatisation from the City of Pärnu and surrounding municipalities, citing the high maintenance costs and the lack of international flights. Mayor Romek Kosenkranius proposed privatisation to find an operator committed to resuming air traffic, drawing on examples from Scandinavian countries. However, Estonian Minister of Infrastructure Vladimir Svet opposes the idea, highlighting the state's investment of USD 21.5 million (€20 million) in the airport and urging alternative solutions.
International flights at Pärnu Airport ceased this summer, and tourism operators have confirmed they will not fund flights next year due to economic challenges. Despite Tallinn Airport showing little interest in developing the facility, Minister Svet suggested exploring options such as attracting commercial tenants and creating a viable business plan to maximise the state's investment. Discussions on the airport's future are ongoing, with no decision yet reached. #1233.MGT1

A consortium of investors, including Canada's Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (Caisse) and Spain's Ferrovial, has sold a combined 38% stake in Heathrow Airport's parent company, FGP TopCo Ltd. in a deal worth USD 3.3 billion. French private equity firm Ardian acquired a 22.6% stake, while Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) purchased 15%. These transactions reflect increasing global interest in aviation infrastructure and sustainability.
Caisse, an investor in Heathrow since 2006, reduced its ownership from 12% to 2.7% as part of a portfolio rebalancing strategy. Ferrovial retains a 5.3% stake, while other sellers collectively hold 10%.
Ardian described Heathrow as a "global infrastructure asset" with strong post-pandemic recovery and growth potential, citing its improved balance sheet and rising passenger numbers. PIF's acquisition aligns with its strategy to foster sustainable growth and support net-zero objectives, enhancing Heathrow's role as a critical aviation hub for the United Kingdom.
Both Ardian and PIF's investments aim to bolster Heathrow's operational capacity, infrastructure modernisation, and sustainability initiatives. The strategic backing will help the airport focus on achieving carbon neutrality, leveraging advanced technologies, and strengthening its role in trade, tourism, and job creation. #1233.MGT2

Doncaster Sheffield Airport (United Kingdom) is set to reopen by spring 2026, with further updates expected in early 2025. This follows the decision by Doncaster Council to lease the site from Peel Group, which closed the airport in November 2022 due to its unavailability after Wizz Air withdrew operations. An operator has been selected to manage the aviation business.
Local mayor Ros Jones emphasised the importance of the airport to the community and businesses, reaffirming her commitment to reopening it. Progress continues, highlighted by the return of an aircraft from aviation firm 2Excel for winter maintenance. This marked the first landing at the site since its closure, carried out as an unlicensed flight.
2Excel co-founder Andy Offer praised the council's efforts to revive the airport, expressing optimism about its future as a key economic and employment hub for South Yorkshire. #1233.MGT3

Newcastle Airport (United Kingdom) is set to sell a 49% stake, valued at up to GBP 1 billion (approximately USD 1.25 billion), with Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) emerging as a key contender. The sale is managed by JP Morgan on behalf of Infrabridge, which currently holds the stake. Local councils will retain ownership of the remaining share.

The auction follows a surge of interest in UK airport assets, driven by strong post-Covid passenger recovery. Recent airport sales include Edinburgh, valued at GBP 2.5 billion, and Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Southampton airports, which collectively sold for GBP 1.5 billion. Newcastle generated an EBITDA of GBP 46 million in 2023, with 2024 profits expected to be higher, justifying its estimated valuation.
PIF, which recently acquired a 37.6% stake in Heathrow Airport alongside French partner Ardian, is seen as a leading bidder. This consortium's Heathrow acquisition, valued at GBP 3.3 billion, was hailed as a vote of confidence in the UK economy. Meanwhile, other major regional airports, including London City, Birmingham, and Bristol, are also being sold, as Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan seeks to offload its European airport portfolio, worth over GBP 10 billion.
Newcastle Airport's sale reflects renewed investor interest in aviation, spurred by faster-than-expected passenger traffic recovery. Heathrow alone is heading for a record year with 83.5 million passengers, up from forecasts of 48.7 million just two years ago. #1233.MGT4

The Luís de Camões Airport project in Campo de Tiro de Alcochete (Portugal) hinges on a proposed 25-year extension of the current concession contract with ANA/Vinci Group, pushing its end date from 2062 to 2087. This extension is a key condition for financing the airport, which is estimated to cost EUR 8 billion (USD 8.7 billion). The project, including the construction of two runways, will be funded exclusively through airport fee adjustments, with no direct contributions from the Portuguese government. However, access infrastructure will remain the state's responsibility, funded by taxpayers.
The government has 30 days to decide whether ANA/Vinci should proceed with a formal bid. If approved, ANA will have 36 months to submit a full proposal, including environmental impact studies, technical reports, and financial assessments. Despite this progress, the airport's completion has faced delays. Originally targeted for 2030 and later 2034, it is now expected between 2034 and 2037 due to challenges such as labour shortages, environmental concerns, and potential legal conflicts over land expropriation.
The Campo de Tiro de Alcochete, currently a military shooting range, will be relocated to Mértola in southern Portugal. Military operations at Figo Maduro Air Base, near Lisbon Airport, will be transferred to Montijo Air Base across the Tagus River. Montijo was previously considered for civil aviation expansion but was ruled out due to environmental concerns and limited long-term capacity.
The project is crucial to meeting Lisbon's growing air travel demand, projected to rise from 33 million passengers today to 108 million by 2050. While the plan may require European Commission approval, there are precedents, such as Greece's 20-year concession extension for Athens Airport.
This marks a significant milestone for Portugal's aviation infrastructure, with the Luís de Camões Airport poised to become the largest privately funded airport development in the country. ANA and Vinci executives remain optimistic about advancing discussions with the government to realise the project.
#1233.MGT5

The Centralny Port Komunikacyjny (CPK), Poland's flagship transportation project designed to create a major air, rail, and road hub near Warsaw, has increased its share capital by PLN 3.5 billion (approximately USD 850 million). This funding, approved by Prime Minister Donald Tusk, will accelerate the development of the airport and high-speed rail infrastructure, which are core components of this transformative project. Key Areas of Investment:
- Airport Development: The additional funds will support the design and planning of key airport components, including the terminal, railway station, public transport hub, and airside and landside areas. Projects include the development of airport systems such as baggage handling, land acquisition for the future airport site, and preparations for construction.

- Supporting Infrastructure: Investments will include road construction to improve airport access and the development of Airport City and Cargo City, vital elements of the supporting infrastructure.
- High-Speed Rail Integration: The funding will also advance the integration of CPK with Poland's national transportation network, focusing on the "Y-line" linking Warsaw, Łódź, Wrocław, and Poznań. Key activities include land acquisition, design work, and preparatory works for the Łódź rail hub and a high-speed rail tunnel.

By 2025, significant progress is expected in the planning and construction of road and rail infrastructure, as well as land acquisitions. These investments aim to position CPK as a cornerstone of Poland's transport network and a driver of economic and regional growth, connecting Poland to key domestic and international destinations. #1233.MGT6

RUSSIA & C.I.S.

The Russian government has allocated an additional RUB 10.5 billion (USD 96 million) to support temporarily closed airports in the southern and central regions of the country. The funds, drawn from the government's reserve fund, aim to partially compensate the operational expenses of airports affected by extended flight restrictions from April to November 2024.
The supported airports include Rostov-on-Don, Krasnodar, Anapa, Gelendzhik, Lipetsk, Belgorod, Bryansk, Kursk, Voronezh, and Simferopol, where civilian flight services have been suspended.
This funding follows previous allocations of RUB 7 billion in 2022, RUB 8 billion in 2023, and RUB 3.9 billion in June 2024, reflecting ongoing efforts to mitigate the financial impact of the closures.
#1233.MGT7

NORTH AMERICA

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has approved a USD 9.4 billion budget for 2025, prioritising the ongoing transformation of its three major airports—John F. Kennedy International (JFK), Newark Liberty International (EWR), and LaGuardia (LGA). A total of USD 3.6 billion is allocated for capital expenditures, including major projects aimed at enhancing airport capacity, efficiency, and passenger experience.
At JFK, the USD 19 billion overhaul continues, with significant progress on new terminals 1 and 6, upgrades to Terminal 8, and the construction of a simplified on-airport roadway network. The first gates for terminals 1 and 6 are expected to open in 2026. Newark Liberty's Vision Plan is advancing, featuring plans for a new Terminal B and the replacement of the outdated AirTrain, with construction slated to begin in late 2025. Meanwhile, LaGuardia has completed its transformation, receiving accolades as the best U.S. airport in 2024, following a total rebuild.
The airport modernisations are part of the Port Authority's broader USD 37 billion 10-year capital plan, which includes sustainable initiatives such as solar energy projects at JFK and a commitment to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The investments aim to enhance passenger experiences, improve operational efficiency, and bolster the region's position as a global aviation hub. #1233.MGT8

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Aena is moving forward with its bid to manage Howard Hamilton International Airport in the Turks and Caicos, while Ferrovial has stepped back from the process. Through its stake in Grupo Aeroportuario del Pacífico (GAP), Aena has proposed a USD 364 million (EUR 346 million) investment to expand the airport, adding a new terminal and parallel taxiway to support 2.5 million passengers annually.
Ferrovial recently sold its stake in Heathrow Airport for EUR 2 billion and is focusing on other opportunities. Competing bids for the 30-year concession include consortia led by Vinci and daa

international. The project aligns with Aena's strategy to increase its international portfolio, aiming for 15% of EBITDA from global operations by 2026. Aena already operates airports in Brazil, Mexico, and Jamaica and views this as another key step in its expansion in the Americas. #1233.MGT9

The Brazilian government has reached an agreement to keep RIOgaleão as the operator of Galeão Airport (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), aiming to stabilise operations and address financial challenges. The deal, which awaits approval from the Federal Court of Accounts (TCU), includes measures to alleviate financial strain, such as converting fixed concession fees of USD 283 million (BRL 1.4 billion) annually into variable payments based on revenue and extending the contract by five years to 2044.

Despite this agreement, a simplified bidding process will be conducted to determine if other investors, including Changi, the concession's main shareholder, are interested in operating the airport. This approach ensures legal compliance while addressing the airport's financial challenges.

Galeão has faced financial difficulties since its privatisation in 2013, exacerbated by Brazil's economic downturn, the pandemic, and the departure of Odebrecht from the consortium. However, recent efforts to limit passenger capacity at nearby Santos Dumont Airport have increased Galeão's traffic by approximately 6 million passengers in 2024, bolstering its role as a hub for international travel and cargo transport.

The Ministry emphasised the importance of the airport for Rio de Janeiro's economy and tourism, with plans to attract more airlines and international flights. The agreement aims to stabilise the concession and avoid scenarios like that of Viracopos Airport, where unresolved financial issues led to the termination of negotiations. #1233.MGT10

Invepar has signed an amendment to the concession contract for Guarulhos International Airport (São Paulo state, Brazil) with the National Civil Aviation Agency (ANAC). The agreement extends the concession term by 16 months in exchange for a USD 283 million (BRL 1.4 billion) investment commitment.

This amendment results from negotiations involving GRU Airport, the federal government of Brazil, and the Tribunal de Contas da União (TCU). The investment focuses on improving infrastructure and services at one of the busiest airports in São Paulo state, reinforcing its position as a key aviation hub in the region. #1233.MGT11

The Brazilian Ministry of Ports and Airports has launched a public consultation for its AmpliAR programme, which aims to attract private investment in regional airports. Contributions can be submitted until 15 January 2025 via the government portal Participa + Brasil.

AmpliAR's first phase will focus on 50 airports in the Amazon and Northeast regions, allowing concessionaires to manage underperforming regional airports through a simplified competitive process. The programme is expected to generate over BRL 5 billion (USD 1.26 billion) in private investment and improve infrastructure in remote areas.

Highlights include the construction and modernisation of terminals, which are critical for connecting isolated regions, especially in the Amazon, where many locations rely on river transport. The tender process for the first phase is scheduled for the first half of 2025, with airports divided into blocks.

The programme follows the National Airport Plan (PAN) methodology to prioritise investments with the highest social benefits. For further details, visit the Ministry of Ports and Airports. #1233.MGT12

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MIDDLE EAST

MATARAT Holding has announced significant progress in the privatisation of several Saudi Arabian airports, with Abha Airport set to transfer to private ownership by the end of 2025. The privatisation process for Abha Airport attracted interest from 100 companies, narrowing down to four consortia: GMR Airports, MADA TAV consortium, Touwaik Alliance (including Incheon International Airport Corporation), and VI Asyad daa consortium. A request for proposals (RfP) for Abha Airport's privatisation, expansion, and improvement was issued on 25 November 2024, with completion of expansion works expected by 2028. The airport is projected to handle 10 million passengers annually by 2030 and 13 million by 2054. Bids are due in April 2025, with an award expected in August 2025.
Additionally, MATARAT is advancing the privatisation of Qassim Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz International Airport and Hail Airport, with expressions of interest (EoIs) for both expected in the first quarter of 2025. Key drivers for Qassim Airport's privatisation include growing traffic demand and increased tourism from North Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian Subcontinent.
For Taif International Airport, MATARAT released an EoI on 2 December 2024 for its development, ownership, and management under a 30-year public-private partnership (PPP) agreement, with submissions due by 10 January 2025. The RfP for Taif Airport is anticipated by February 2025. These privatisation efforts are part of MATARAT's broader strategy to enhance airport infrastructure and expand capacity across Saudi Arabia. #1233.MGT13

ASIA PACIFIC

The Indian government clarified its approach to airport privatisation, stating that airports are not being privatised but leased for 50 years under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework. Ownership of airport land remains with the Airports Authority of India (AAI), and assets revert to AAI after the lease period, as per concession agreements. Since 2014, six airports have been leased for improved operations and development, including those in Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Mangaluru, Jaipur, Guwahati, and Thiruvananthapuram. Each is managed by a private company under PPP.
As part of the National Monetisation Pipeline, 25 more airports are earmarked for leasing by 2025, including Bhubaneswar, Varanasi, Amritsar, and Chennai. The leasing aims to enhance airport infrastructure through private sector efficiency and investment, benefiting passengers and regional economies. Revenue from leased airports is reinvested into developing India's aviation infrastructure.
India's aviation sector has also reached a historic milestone, recording over 500,000 domestic passengers in a single day in 2024. This achievement reflects the government's focus on improving regional connectivity and airport infrastructure, which has made air travel accessible to millions. #1233.MGT14

Gateway Development Alliance (GDA), a consortium including Malaysia's Employees Provident Fund (EPF), Khazanah Nasional Bhd's UEM Group, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), and Blackrock Inc-backed Global Infrastructure Partners, is maintaining its RM11 per share bid to privatise Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) despite the recommendation by MAHB's independent directors to reject the offer. The offer values MAHB at RM18.35 billion (approximately USD 3.91 billion), requiring over RM12.3 billion (USD 2.62 billion) for the acquisition of shares not already held by the consortium.
MAHB's independent directors argue the bid undervalues the company, highlighting its financial growth, strategic potential, and public ownership benefits. In contrast, GDA claims MAHB's operational and financial performance lags behind its Asia-Pacific peers, citing underinvestment, ageing infrastructure, and market share decline. The consortium stresses that privatisation would enable necessary capital investments and technical expertise to revitalise MAHB, including improving infrastructure, passenger services, and airline connectivity.

The offer reflects a premium on MAHB's pre-announcement share price but remains below the independent valuation of RM12.61 to RM13.71 per share. If successful, the deal would increase public ownership stakes by Khazanah and EPF to 70% while retaining the Malaysian government's golden share, ensuring the asset remains strategically significant for the country. #1233.MGT15

Asia-Pacific Strategic Investments (APSI) has signed a cooperation agreement with the Timor-Leste government to manage and operate Oecusse Airport in the Oecusse Special Administrative Region and Suai Airport in Cova Lima municipality. This marks the company's potential entry into the aviation infrastructure sector, pending shareholder approval.
Under the agreement, APSI will develop procedures to enhance safety and efficiency, manage staff and service providers, and create strategic plans to establish the airports as international hubs. The Timor-Leste government will assist in securing necessary permits and regulatory approvals and will receive 20% of profits from commercial activities at the airports.
The cooperation agreement aims to lead to a 30-year lease within three months, with APSI taking responsibility for financing, development, and operations. This move represents a significant diversification for the company, supported by government coordination to ensure smooth implementation. #1233.MGT16

The PHP 20 billion (USD 360 million) proposal to upgrade Iloilo International Airport (The Philippines) is set for submission to the National Economic and Development Authority Investment Coordination Committee (NEDA ICC) following successful negotiations with Prime Asset Ventures Inc. (PAVI) of the Villar group. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Center Deputy Executive Director Jeffrey Manalo confirmed that projects exceeding PHP 15 billion require NEDA ICC approval before being endorsed to the NEDA Board. Once approved, the project will undergo a comparative challenge period lasting 90 days to one year, during which other firms can submit offers that PAVI has the right to match.
The project aims to enhance the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines' management of the airport by expanding the passenger terminal building (PTB), constructing an apron adjacent to the PTB extension, renovating the existing terminal, installing modern passenger service equipment, and ensuring operations and maintenance improvements. #1233.MGT17

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) is urging the acceleration of regional airport upgrades through public-private partnerships (PPP), aligning with the Marcos administration's emphasis on private sector collaboration. CAAP has expressed readiness to partner with private firms for rehabilitation projects and to relinquish operational roles in airports transferred to private management under PPP agreements.
CAAP Director General Manuel Antonio Tamayo highlighted that modernising provincial airports will bolster tourism, investment, and economic growth. CAAP is collaborating with the International Finance Corp. (IFC) to explore new airport projects in Dumaguete and Siargao, with IFC advising on contract bidding.
President Marcos recently witnessed the P4.53-billion turnover of the Bohol-Panglao International Airport to the Aboitiz Group, tasked with expanding the airport's capacity to 3.9 million passengers annually and constructing a new terminal under a 30-year concession. Aboitiz InfraCapital (AIC) has also acquired operations at Laguindingan Airport and Mactan-Cebu International Airport.
The momentum for PPPs has grown with the P170.6-billion rehabilitation of Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) by New NAIA Infrastructure Corp., aimed at revitalising the gateway's reputation. These

efforts reflect a strategic push to improve the travel experience and enhance infrastructure across the Philippines. #1233.MGT18

The future of Kaitāia Airport, New Zealand's northernmost airport, is set to be secured through an agreement to be signed on 13 December 2024. The airport, to be renamed Te Hiku Airport, has faced nearly a decade of uncertainty since the expiration of its long-term lease in 2016. The new agreement resolves land ownership disputes stemming from the 2012 Treaty settlement with Ngāi Takoto and involves returning the land to a joint iwi-hapū trust.
The trust, owned 50-50 by Ngāi Takoto and three hapū of Ngāti Kāhu, will lease the land to the Far North District Council for 35 years, ensuring continued airport operations. The Crown and the council will co-fund upgrades to the airport, with the Crown contributing over NZD 5 million (approximately USD 3.2 million).
Te Hiku Airport remains a vital transport hub, with Barrier Air operating weekly flights to Auckland and the facility supporting medical staff transfers and emergency transport when road access is compromised. The airport's renaming reflects its significance to the wider Te Hiku region and marks a step forward in resolving long-standing issues over its future. #1233.MGT19

The concession for Tahiti-Faa'a Airport (French Polynesia) has been postponed again, with the application deadline extended from 17 December 2024 to 4 February 2025. This marks another chapter in a long-standing legal and administrative struggle since 2011, delaying the much-needed modernisation of this vital hub, which served over 1.7 million passengers in 2023.
Two key contenders remain: Vinci Airports and Egis, with Egis partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Islands of Tahiti (CCISM) for a more locally-focused bid. Originally awarded to Egis in 2010 for 30 years, the concession has faced repeated annulments and re-bids due to legal challenges.
The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGAC) will evaluate the new proposals over the next two years, aiming for a new concession to begin on 1 January 2027. The winning bidder will be tasked with ambitious renovation plans, including infrastructure upgrades, sustainability initiatives, enhanced security, and capacity expansion to meet growing passenger demands. #1233.MGT20

Airport Charges, Regulation & Policy

The Dublin Airport Authority (daa) is urging swift legislative action to lift Dublin Airport's 32 million annual passenger cap to support growth and meet increasing demand, potentially rising to 55 million passengers in the future. Speaking during a court hearing on 4 December 2024, daa CEO Kenny Jacobs highlighted the need to reform planning laws and reclassify the airport as strategic infrastructure to simplify and accelerate the process.
Currently, planning permissions, including the requested increase to 40 million passengers, require approval from Fingal County Council and compliance with noise regulations assessed by the Aircraft Noise Competent Authority (ANCA). Delays in this process, coupled with public consultations, pose challenges for expanding capacity. The cap, introduced in 2007 with the construction of Terminal 2, has also been temporarily suspended by the Irish High Court to protect airlines' historic slots, following legal actions by Aer Lingus, Ryanair, and Airlines for America.
Year-on-year capacity at Dublin Airport is projected to decline by 4.3% in the 2025 summer season due to the cap. Jacobs has called for the incoming government, led by Fianna Fáil, to act on its pre-election promises to remove the cap and support Dublin Airport's role in meeting regional and international air travel needs. #1233.MGT21

Germany's state premiers have called on the federal government to reduce regulatory costs to strengthen the competitiveness of the country's aviation sector, which has been struggling as airlines move operations to more profitable airports in neighbouring European countries. The Ministerpräsidentenkonferenz (MPK) has urged immediate measures, including lowering the aviation tax and cancelling the planned increase in aviation security fees set for January 2025.
Ralph Beisel, CEO of the ADV (German Airports Association), welcomed the MPK's resolution, highlighting its importance for economic growth and job security in regional areas. He stressed that removing the aviation tax is vital for restoring the aviation sector's competitiveness, encouraging airlines to introduce new routes, and enhancing travel options for both private and business passengers. Additionally, German airports support the MPK's call to improve connectivity by negotiating air traffic agreements with third countries.
The MPK also analysed other cost burdens, such as the German Power-to-Liquid blending mandate, and called for its abolition. To ensure fair competition, the premiers have demanded adjustments to the EU's ReFuelAviation regulation and the establishment of equitable conditions across Europe. These recommendations are seen as a blueprint for the next federal coalition agreement. #1233.MGT22

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has raised concerns about a growing airport capacity crunch, which is restricting air travel freedom and hindering economic growth. With nearly 400 airports worldwide already requiring slot coordination due to insufficient capacity, this number could rise by 25% over the next decade. A recent IATA White Paper advocates for changes to slot regulations to push airports to maximise capacity from existing infrastructure, given political constraints on large-scale developments like new runways or terminals.
Europe exemplifies the issue, where Airports Council International (ACI) Europe estimates that by 2050, 12% of demand may go unmet due to infrastructure limitations, threatening the region's competitiveness. IATA argues that while airlines face penalties for underutilising slots, airports lack accountability for failing to optimise or deliver promised capacity. The organisation calls for stronger obligations on airports, including regular reviews of capacity declarations, benchmarking against global best practices, and penalties for underperformance.
IATA's proposals aim to close the gap between efficient and underperforming airports, ensuring that slot systems continue to improve connectivity, consumer choice, and affordability. By holding airports accountable, these measures seek to maximise the social and economic value of existing airport infrastructure, enhancing global air transport accessibility and service quality. #1233.MGT23

ACI EUROPE has responded to IATA's recent statements on airport capacity and slot regulation, rejecting claims that airports are not maximising their existing infrastructure.
While acknowledging the capacity challenges highlighted in IATA's White Paper, ACI EUROPE emphasised that airports are already investing heavily in technology and infrastructure to optimise operations, despite limited control over how airlines use capacity.
The organisation criticised the outdated EU Airport Slot Regulation, which has been in place for over 30 years, for contributing to capacity wastage and stifling competition. ACI EUROPE reiterated its call for modernising these regulations to promote better capacity use, maintain competition, and enhance connectivity, aligning with recommendations in the Draghi report on European competitiveness.
Director General Olivier Jankovec highlighted that airlines could help alleviate the capacity crunch by returning unused slots more quickly and avoiding slot hoarding rather than shifting blame onto airports. He also pointed out that capacity declarations must remain realistic to reflect physical constraints.

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ACI EUROPE, which represents over 500 airports in 55 countries, continues to advocate for collaborative solutions to address Europe's airport capacity challenges, ensuring sustainable and competitive aviation growth. #1233.MGT24

Events

Vienna Airport hosted the Vienna CESEE Airport Forum from 4 to 6 December 2024, welcoming over 180 industry, political, and business representatives to discuss the future of aviation in Central and South Eastern Europe (CESEE). Organised with ACI Europe, the forum addressed growth strategies, airline market development, cybersecurity, sustainability, and the concept of airport cities. Keynote speeches by figures such as Susanne Kraus-Winkler, Austria's State Secretary for Labour and Economic Affairs, and Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI Europe, opened discussions on economic and geopolitical challenges. The forum featured thought-provoking presentations, panels, and networking events, concluding with the Aviation Get Together in Vienna's Museumsquartier.
Held at the state-of-the-art Vienna Airport Conference & Innovation Centre, the event underscored Vienna Airport's role as a premier venue for international aviation dialogue, offering cutting-edge facilities and spectacular views from its Level 22 tower venue. The forum highlighted collaboration and innovation as vital to shaping the future of aviation in the region. #1233.MGT25

Names

Mitteldeutsche Flughafen AG (MFAG), which manages Leipzig/Halle and Dresden airports in Germany, has announced the appointment of Anke Förster as its new Chief Financial Officer (CFO), effective 1 January 2025. Förster will succeed Ingo Ludwig and was chosen following an extensive selection process.
Hiltrud Werner, Chair of the Supervisory Board, highlighted that MFAG faces critical years ahead as it continues its restructuring and transformation efforts. She praised Förster's extensive experience in the aviation and logistics sectors, expressing confidence that her leadership will strengthen the company during this pivotal period. Werner also noted that starting the new year with a fully staffed executive team will provide the foundation needed to tackle upcoming challenges successfully. The Supervisory Board extended its best wishes to Förster as she steps into this significant role. #1233.MGT26

Aletta von Massenbach, CEO of Berlin Brandenburg Airport (BER), has been elected President of the German Airport Association (ADV), supported by Vice Presidents Lars Redeligx (Düsseldorf Airport) and Ludger van Bebber (Dortmund Airport). Von Massenbach, an internationally experienced aviation expert, aims to promote modern, sustainable airport management and foster collaboration among German airports to address current challenges.
Outgoing President Dr Stefan Schulte praised her vision and commitment, highlighting her role in shaping the future of German airports. The new leadership team's term begins on 1 January 2025 and runs through 31 December 2026. Additionally, the ADV announced new chairs for its specialist committees, focusing on areas such as climate protection, infrastructure, and legislation, further strengthening the association's strategic direction. #1233.MGT27

Mike Gula, CEO of Columbia Metropolitan Airport (South Carolina, United States), has resigned as of 13 December 2024, according to an announcement from the airport. The decision, described as amicable, reflects Gula's intent to pursue new opportunities and spend more time with his family. Gula joined the airport in 2014 as director of operations and became CEO in 2018. A nationwide search will be conducted to find his replacement.

During Gula's tenure, the airport experienced significant growth, including a recent partnership with Allegiant Airlines and plans for an on-site hotel. Long-term goals include adding new gates to accommodate more flights and passengers and installing a solar panel grid on the parking deck roof, funded by a USD 3 million grant. Passenger traffic is expected to reach 1.4 million by year-end, with projections exceeding 2 million by 2044. The airport's oversight commission emphasised its readiness to continue pursuing its development plans. #1233.MGT28

The Sacramento County Department of Airports (SCDA) has promoted Chris Wimsatt to the newly created role of assistant director of airports. Reporting to Director Cindy Nichol, Wimsatt will oversee strategic initiatives across SCDA's four airports, focusing on operational excellence and community engagement.
Since joining SCDA in 2021 as deputy director of finance and administration, Wimsatt has led key projects, including securing the airport's first bond deal in 12 years, financing the USD 1.3 billion SMForward capital improvement programme, and increasing monthly customer facility charge collections by nearly USD 800,000. His contributions have earned him recognition, such as ACI-NA's 2024 Medium-Hub Airport Finance Professional of the Year and The Bond Buyer's 2023 Rising Star award.
With a background in aviation finance, including his previous role as CFO of Dayton's Department of Aviation, Wimsatt brings extensive expertise to his new position, where he aims to enhance SCDA's innovation, service, and community impact. #1233.MGT29

Bonaire International Airport (BIA), the operator of Flamingo Airport in the Caribbean Netherlands, is strengthening its organisation to support its ambitious development plans. Under the leadership of Director Maarten van der Scheer, the airport is focused on modernising its facilities, including platform renovations, terminal expansions, and commercial developments, in response to the island's growing population and increasing visitor numbers.
To accelerate these efforts, BIA has decided to transition to a two-member executive team. Marco van de Kreeke, a seasoned airport professional and former director of BIA (2005–2008), has been appointed interim director for at least six months. During this period, he will collaborate with Van der Scheer to advance the airport's plans and organisational growth. Van de Kreeke's extensive experience is expected to enhance BIA's capacity to execute its development agenda effectively.
The airport aims to provide opportunities for local talent and foster the growth of high-potential employees within the organisation. While Van de Kreeke supports the executive team, he will step down as chairman of the Supervisory Board (RvC), with Vice-Chair Angel Bermudez temporarily taking over the role. A search for Van de Kreeke's replacement on the RvC will begin soon. #1233.MGT30