

20th Florence Air Forum

# Assessing the airport ecosystem: which way forward?

27 May 2024

Sala Europa - Villa Schifanoia, Via Boccaccio 121 - Florence

**Juan Montero** | Director Transport Area FSR, Florence School of Regulation

## Introduction

Aviation is crucial for Europe's mobility, connectivity, and competitiveness. With over 900 million air passengers travelling to, from, and within the European Union each year, Europe makes up a third of the global aviation market.

The liberalisation of the internal aviation market has been a major EU success in terms of enabling significant growth for the sector and delivering benefits to consumers. It has also supported the EU's competitiveness globally. At the same time, there have also been unintended environmental impacts in terms of CO2 emissions, pollution and noise.

The Commission's Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy sets the goal of developing a resilient, competitive and sustainable transport sector that can deliver affordable connectivity to all EU regions. These goals are set against the background of an aviation market that has been substantially changing in recent years with more pressing and new challenges, such as increasing capacity constraints, evolving market power, consolidation in the air services sector and the strategic goals of enhancing sustainability, digitalisation and resilience.

Efficient airport capacity management is a key component of a well-functioning aviation market. Being able to access competitively priced, sustainable and quality capacity is a necessary ingredient of a well-functioning aviation market that can deliver affordable connectivity to consumers. The access, pricing and quality of airport capacity have been traditionally governed by EU legislative pieces on the [allocation of slots](#) at airports, on [ground handling services](#) and [airport charges](#) facing airlines.

Given the Union's strategic goals of decarbonisation, digitalisation, competition and affordable connectivity, it is only logical to take a step back and assess the current regulations affecting airports from a holistic and systemic perspective – are they functioning well? can anything be done to make airport capacity management more efficient? are the rules sufficient to enable investment and effective deployment of green and digital solutions at airports? is there any scope for a more holistic and systemic approach to airport capacity management? can greater reliance on communication, digital solutions or AI make airport capacity management more efficient?

Hence, the 20th Florence Air Forum, co-organised by the Transport Area of the Florence School of Regulation together with the European Commission's DG MOVE, aims at discussing and evaluating holistically the current airport regulations and the interplay with other legislation as far as it affects the efficient function of the airport ecosystem.



## Draft Programme

**27 May**

8:45-9:00 *Welcome coffee*

9:00-9:20 **Setting the scene**

**Matthias Finger** | Deputy Director, FSR Transport, EUI

**Filip Cornelis** | Director for Aviation, DG MOVE, European Commission

9:20-10:50 SESSION A

### **The Impact of Consolidation in the Airline Sector**

*Discussion questions: What's the impact of consolidation in the airline sector on the efficient use of airport capacity, connectivity and affordability? Are we heading towards the US model?*

**Chris Gadsden** | Easyjet

**Aurélie Joly** | Group ADP

**Alex Weidmann** | Swissport

Roundtable discussion

10:50-11:20 *Coffee break*

11:20-12:50 SESSION B

### **Ensuring Efficient Competition Among Airports**

*Discussion questions: How do airports compete with each other, and is this competition effective? Is there a need for a more uniform set of rules governing airport charges? Who should pay for the investment in green and digital infrastructure?*

**Oliver Sommer** | Berlin Airport

**Vassiliki Christidi** | SkyExpress

**Steven Truxal** | University Leiden

12:50-13:50 *Lunch break*

13:50-15:20 SESSION C

### **Revolutionizing Airport Ecosystem Management**

*Discussion questions: Is there a need for a new and systemic way of managing the airport ecosystem that delivers quality and affordable connectivity to consumers? Could greater reliance on intra-stakeholder communication, digital solutions (AI) and longer-term management of capacity be needed?*

**Fabio Gamba** | Airport Services Association

**André Schneider** | CEO of Geneva airport

**Ruben Schuster** | Lufthansa (confirmed)

Roundtable discussion

15:20-15:40 *Coffee break*

15:40-16:00

**Synthesis and Concluding Remarks**

**Matthias Finger** | Deputy Director Transport Area FSR, Florence School of Regulation

**Filip Cornelis** | Director for Aviation, DG MOVE, European Commission

**Dominik Piotrowski** | DG MOVE, European Commission

**Juan Montero** | Director Transport Area FSR, Florence School of Regulation