

Exchange

Newsletter for Aviation Campaigners across Europe

No 6

June 2012

Nationwide Protests Continue in Germany

Nationwide protests continue to take place across Germany. There was a national day of action on 24th March when protests took place in Munich, Frankfurt, Berlin, Leipzig, Cologne and Dusseldorf. In addition, the weekly protests have continued in Frankfurt. There have been regular rallies in Berlin. And, in Munich, there has been spectacular direct action in the city centre. There are more detailed reports of the German demonstrations on pages two and three.

French campaigners go on Hunger Strike



In one of the most dramatic and moving protests ever staged anywhere in the world against airport expansion French farmers went on hunger strike for 28 days as part of the campaign to stop the building of a new airport outside Nantes in France. The peasant farmers, led by Michel Tarin and Gilles Denigot, were protesting against the compulsory purchase of their land before the authorities had been given permission to build the airport. All the French presidential candidates, except Nicholas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande, supported the strikers. But, after Hollande was elected President,

it was agreed that the land would not be taken until all the legal procedures had been completed. That is expected to take at least two years. The campaigners hope, though, that the plans for the airport may be dropped after the French parliamentary elections which take place this month. If the Socialists, who support the building of the airport, do not get an overall majority in the Parliament, they may need to rely on support from the Greens. It is possible that the Greens will only give their support if the Socialists drop plans for the airport.

Meanwhile, the Nantes campaigners have taken the initiative by offering to host a major European Conference on the site of the proposed new airport at Notre-Dames-des-Landes. The 2nd European Forum Against Imposed Useless Major Projects will take place in Notre-Dame-des-Landes, from July 7th to 11th 2012. This forum is a follow-up to the first which took place in Susa, Italy in August 2011 as part of the World Social Forum. More information about the forum and the Nantes campaign can be found on <http://acipa.free.fr/>.



Notre-Dame-des-Landes (44)
Du 7 au 11 juillet 2012

Organisation: coordination des opposants au projet d'aéroport
http://forum-gpi-2012-nal.blogspot.com contact: forum.gpi@free.fr

Direct Action in Munich



Plane Stupid Germany was launched in spectacular style at the end of May when campaigners hung a banner from the town hall in Munich's main square. It was followed less than a week later by an action at Victory Gate, carried out jointly with the German NGO Robin Wood. The actions have been planned in the run-up to a referendum which will take place on Sunday 17th June in Munich on whether its citizens support the proposals for a 3rd runway at Munich Airport. The campaigners are annoyed that referendum only includes the people of Munich. The city is not overflown. The people outside the town, who are overflown and who will be badly hit by a 3rd runway, are excluded from the referendum. If the people of Munich vote against the proposals, it will be very difficult for the authorities to build a new runway. However, if even they vote in favour, it is by no means certain the runway will be built. The campaigners feel they can defeat the plans. They have built an impressive alliance between local residents, climate campaigners and direct action activists. There is no capacity problem at Munich Airport. It is thought the authorities are simply wanting to get planning permission to make the airport more attractive to a private company when it is privatized. The next step in the campaigners strategy to defeat the airport plans is to hold a Climate Camp on 13th – 15th July. If you would like to find out more about it or to attend, email florian.sperk@posteo.de For more about the background to the campaign: <http://www.foeeurope.org/node/896> .

Astonishing Protests Continue in Frankfurt

The historic protests continue against the 4th runway in Frankfurt. Since its opening in October, thousands of residents have occupied the terminal every Monday night. They intend to continue at least until the regional and national elections in 2013. They hope to influence the elections. Already their protests have helped persuade the German courts to ban night flights at the airport until 5am. The protests are a result of the huge changes that were made to the flight paths when the new runway opened. The campaigners are calling for the runway to close.



Major Rally in Berlin

A major rally was held outside the town hall in Berlin on Sunday 3rd June. It was staged by the campaigners against the new Brandenburg Airport. The airport was due to open 3rd June but the opening date has now been put back to March 2013. The airport will be an extension of the existing Schonfeld Airport and will replace Tegel and Tempelhof airports. Campaigners are concerned about the new flight paths which



Florian Sperk, who heads up the Munich campaign, introduces John Stewart at the Berlin rally

will mean high noise levels for local residents. More on the demonstration: <http://youtu.be/TSPLoXv5f-Q>. Earlier protests saw more than 10,000 people march against the new airport.

EU Airports Package Outcome Disappointing

The final recommendations from the European Commission on the ‘Airports Package’ are disappointing. It is probable that the recommendations will be accepted by the Council of Ministers and become European law.

The ‘airports package’ regulations replace the EU Directive on Aircraft Noise. The draft regulations, originally proposed by the European Commission at the end of last year, were discussed and amended by the European Parliament. The Parliament heard evidence from a number of bodies, included UECNA which was represented by Martin Kessel and Alain Peri.

The result of the negotiations between the European Commission and the European Parliament is a compromise solution. The original European Commission proposals were heavily influenced by the aviation industry. Many of the members of the European Parliament tried to change the proposals so they did more for residents under the flight paths and for the environment. But, overall, the result is disappointing.

The final proposals recommend that “the ICAO standards and EU best practice in noise management become European law in order to even out disparities between states and ensure that certain processes are adhered to where measures are taken to mitigate air traffic noise” and that “competent authorities should be able to focus on marginally compliant aircraft and phase them out first, instead of introducing general night flight bans.” These are things that the aviation industry was very keen to get.

But the industry has not got all it was asking for. They have had to accept “a more stringent definition of marginally compliant aircraft” and, most importantly of all, “decisions on the substance of noise-related operating restrictions would remain with member states.” That probably means that, if countries wanted to introduce a night ban, for example, they would still be free to do so. The overall result, however, does show that it is a mistake for aviation campaigners to put too much faith in the European Union. We are much more likely to win through the sort of grassroots campaigning that is taking place in France and Germany.

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 your material to the UECNA website:
www.uecna.eu email JP Pago on 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 or email Horst Weise on 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.

Two sites which show you whether your airport and the airlines using it is losing or gaining passengers:

<http://www.anna.aero/european-airline-traffic-trends/>

<http://www.anna.aero/european-airport-traffic-trends/>

If you have videos you want to share, email them to johnstewart2@btconnect.com

Campaigning and Information Sheets

UECNA has published short campaigning and briefing sheets to assist organizations with their campaigning:

<http://www.uecna.eu/sip.php?article161>

This newsletter has been published by UECNA. We are a network of 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 If your group is interested in joining UECNA, email johnstewart2@btconnect.com