Key Demands of the Resolution

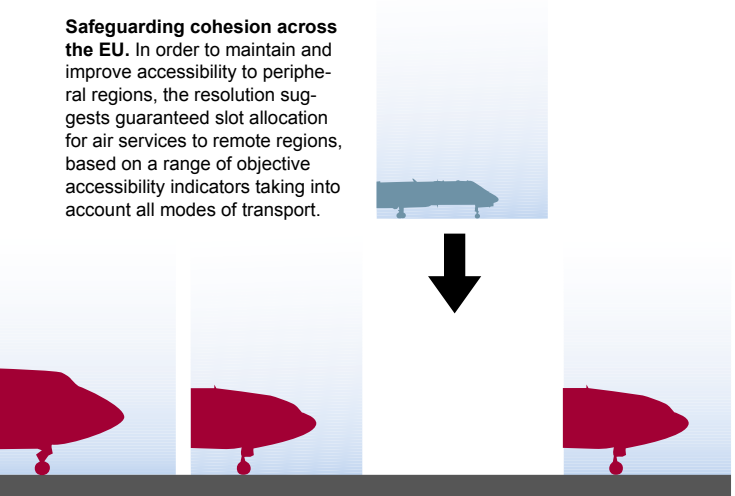
1. **Amend the existing slot allocation rules at network airports** to ensure that existing services to regional destinations can be retained and developed, and that previously served routes can be reinstated.

2. **Revise and improve the rules for Public Service Obligations** (PSO) to ensure the continuity of regional services to remote areas.

3. **Facilitate the provision of start-up aid** (route development funds) to new regional air routes connecting peripheral regions.

4. **Improve EU monitoring of adequate runway capacity** to support the provision of existing and future regional air services to peripheral regional airports.

Safeguarding cohesion across the EU. In order to maintain and improve accessibility to peripheral regions, the resolution suggests guaranteed slot allocation for air services to remote regions, based on a range of objective accessibility indicators taking into account all modes of transport.



SEAPLANE Partners

- Ministry for Economics, Labour and Transport, Lower Saxony, *Lead Partner* (DE)
- Ministry for Economy and Ports, Bremen (DE)
- Province of Drenthe (NL)
- Province of Groningen (NL)
- The Highland Council (UK)
- Municipality of Klippan (SE)
- Kristianstad Airport (SE)
- Kronoberg County Council (SE)
- Møre og Romsdal County Council (NO)
- City of Stavanger (NO)
- Municipality of Växjö (SE)
- Vest-Agder County Council (NO)
- Province of West-Flanders (FL)

Web site: www.seaplane-project.net
Co-ordination: Hartmut Beyer, Uniconsult (DE)
Email: h.beyer@uniconsult-hh.de
Phone: +49 (0)40 33 62 16
Fax: +49 (0)40 32 27 64

SEAPLANE

Sustainable and Efficient Air Transport – Platform for Linked Analysis of the North Sea Air Transport Environment

INTERREG North Sea, Measure 2.2
Start Date: 30/09/2002
End Date: 30/04/2005

European Commission

Interreg North Sea Region

Resolution to the Commission of the European Union

– to be submitted to DG TREN in November 2004

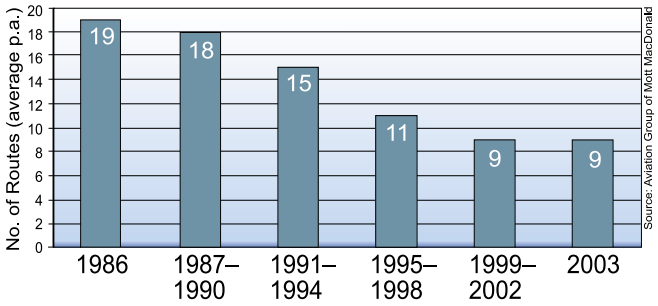
All graphics © 2004 BMT Transport Solutions GmbH (www.bmt-ts.com)

www.seaplane-project.net/resolution

Background of the Resolution

The North Sea region has many remote areas for which air transport is vital in order to secure adequate access to the market and to sustain a positive regional economic development.

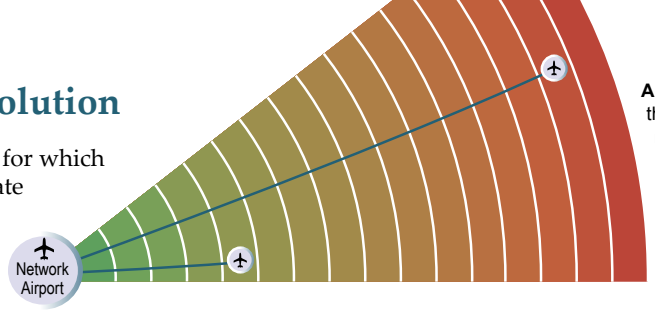
Many regional airlines can barely remain profitable in the face of market concentration and strong competitive pressures exerted by the low budget sector. While general EU policy guidelines stress the importance of mobility and accessibility of peripheral regions, the move towards an increasingly market-oriented regulatory framework means that for these regions, access to network airports is becoming increasingly difficult.



The threat to regional routes. An example for the erosion of regional accessibility is London Heathrow Airport (LHR) where between 1986 and 2003, the number of routes to regional airports has shrunk from 19 to just 9.

When regional services are terminated, airlines often use their slots at network airports for more profitable international routes. This not only has a negative effect on regional business travel; it contributes to increasing levels of unemployment and depopulation in peripheral regions, with all the negative social consequences.

Inaugurating new routes to peripheral destinations carries a high business risk for airlines. Public Service Obligation (PSO) rules and related public funds can be instruments to facilitate the inauguration of new routes which stimulate the regional economy and in turn, transport demand.



Accessibility. Because of their distance to main markets, remote regions are at a disadvantage regarding economic development and social cohesion. Air services are often less profitable and therefore in danger of being discontinued.

The Purpose of the Resolution

In order to redress the problems experienced by peripheral regions, the SEAPLANE project partners have submitted a joint **Resolution to the EU Commission**[1] to make it more fully aware of the situation, and to propose adequate regulatory measures to secure a long-term sustainable air service to peripheral regions.

The SEAPLANE consortium. A group photo at a General Assembly in Växjö shows representatives from the regions as well as consultants to the project.

The resolution is based on the result of investigations carried out within the SEAPLANE project. These include case studies demonstrating the importance of adequate scheduled air services to peripheral regions, and a management tool for airport slot allocation to flight connections linking these regions. This tool is based on a range of accessibility indicators (taking into account all transport modes) which together define whether a region is counted as ‚peripheral'.

Changing the world of slot allocation is difficult. The resolution does not intend to revolutionize the allocation regime. It merely proposes that returned slots as well as any new capacity should be split equally between new airlines and routes to peripheral regions. It honours the market principle by prioritising, within routes ranked as peripheral, commercially operated over publicly subsidised routes.

1) Read the full text at http://www.seaplane-project.net/resolution

Who created the Resolution?

The resolution is the outcome of the **SEAPLANE** project. On 14 April 2004, all the North Sea regions participating in SEAPLANE have endorsed the resolution to express their concerns about the situation for regional aviation, and to propose actions to improve it.

The SEAPLANE project aims to devise strategies for strengthening the regional air transport network and securing a sustainable future of their airports and routes.

SEAPLANE is co-funded through the European Union's INTERREG III B North Sea programme. The ultimate aim of SEAPLANE is to contribute to the goal of equitable development and to support social and economic cohesion in the North Sea region.

The next steps

The resolution is directed at EU decision makers within DG TREN and DG Regio. It has already been endorsed by the *North Sea Commission* and is supported by several Members of the European Parliament (MEP) and members of national parliaments.

The resolution will be submitted to relevant bodies such as the *Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions* (CPMR) and the *Airport Council International* (AIC). It will also be sent to the respective MEPs of the regions affected. On 23 November 2004, the resolution will be presented to all relevant stakeholders at a seminar in Scotland House in Brussels, including representatives from EU institutions, airlines and interregional organisations.