

# The Future of Aviation

**After almost nine months of preparations, Aerius in close co-operation with PNL (Platform Nederlandse Luchtvaart) organized On March 11<sup>th</sup> the symposium “Aviation in the Netherlands, in a responsible way towards the Future” (in Dutch: ‘Luchtvaart in Nederland, Verantwoord de Toekomst in’). Around 150 participants attended the conference that took off at 09.00 in the morning in the Auditorium of the Schiphol Group headquarters at the airport.**

By the editors with the kind co-operation of Mr. Johan Schölvinc

The audience consisted of amongst others, students, professionals in the aviation business and press; a greater number than expected and could be accommodated. Mr. Johan Schölvinc of Goudappel Coffeng, an independent consulting agent for transport and spatial economics, and member of the Aerius Advisory Board presided the seminar and welcomed all attendees and speakers:

- Mr. L. van Wijk, CEO of KLM
- Mr. A. Groeneveld, President Dutch Aviation Group and President Dutch Dakota Association
- Mr. R. Wondolleck, CEO of Rotterdam Airport
- Mr. B. Baksteen, President Platform Nederlandse Luchtvaart

Mr. Leo van Wijk, CEO of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines criticised the government for obstructing the KLM-Air France merger due to regulations limiting the growth of industry in the Netherlands. He strongly oppose to the idea that with the merger flights will be assigned to Paris instead of Amsterdam and see no necessity to secure Schiphol’s mainport position by having one or more (other) home carriers based at the airport. He believes the Dutch act in an unreliable way with regard to the Dutch-French alliance and calls to other anybody in the industry to contribute in a positive way enabling the alliance to succeed. KLM opposes the privatization of Schiphol as this will create a corporate monopoly and will only accept if there is a strict economic framework.

Mr. Van Wijk acknowledges there are no real guarantees; Schiphol’s economic role can only be enforced through a sound competitive positioning on the market.



*Mr. Leo van Wijk speaking during the conference, with other speakers behind the table.*

As second speaker, Mr Anne-Cor Groeneveld spoke about the Dutch aviation knowledge economy and pointed out that regarding this specific aspect of knowledge economics, the focus is too much on technical aspects and too less on the ultimate goal: to obtain a competitive advantage in global transport networks. From his point of view, innovation should focus on the cultural and economic aspects of our society and is about collaboration amongst the many actors involved.

CEO Roland Wondolleck of Rotterdam Airport convinced his

audience about his faith for the future of regional airports. Some twenty years ago, Mr. Wondolleck had to fight against political intentions to close his airport, but nowadays, citizens in the catchment area of his airport seem to prefer less travelling time as they love departing from his airport. Despite the fact that regional airports also have to operate economically, local governments should stop to limit the growth of regional airports but to improve circumstances for them to flourish.

As closing speaker, Mr. Baksteen’s message was crystal clear: aviation is infrastructure that is necessary to accommodate demand for growth. In comparison to other countries, the external effects (e.g. noise nuisance)

of aviation are not that big. According to Mr. Baksteen, the Netherlands is also not a densely populated country as is widely believed, but just a thinly populated city! Mr. Baksteen concluded with an optimistic message as he said that aviation is not a desperate problem, but instead has a golden future!

This conference was certainly a success, but was never possible without efforts of all volunteers involved, thank you all! We also would like to thank our sponsors Schiphol Group, Dutch Aviation Group, LVNL, NLR and SDU Uitgevers.