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**Closing address of the European Civil Aviation Summit**  
**Bordeaux 17 - 19 November 2008**  
**Bordeaux, 19 November 2008**

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MEPs,  
Chairpersons and Managing Directors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to bring to an end this two day 2008 European Aviation Summit, organised in the framework of the French Presidency of the European Union. Yesterday you enjoyed an evening in a large Medoc mansion that I am well acquainted with, being a councillor of the neighbouring region.

Bordeaux and the Aquitaine region are poles of the French aeronautics sector. I am also delighted to have brought together in this town all those concerned by European air transport: law-makers, regulators, constructors, operators, air traffic and airport managers and all the personnel without whom the entire air transport system would be ineffective.

The air transport sector is currently experiencing trying times. First of all the high price of kerosene has affected airlines, in particular during the first six months of the year. Order books remain full but times are nevertheless hard. The under-evaluation of the price of the dollar is harming European aeronautic industry competitiveness on the world market. Also the sector is suffering from the financial crisis and risks of recession. The economic slowdown has already had a real impact on activity, an impact for which it is difficult to predict the extent and the length. The trend reversal is clear cut: traffic in the month of September declined by 2% in France compared with 2007, world traffic, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), is down 2.9% for passenger transport and 7.7% for freight.

The air transport sector must face several challenges: in terms of economy, energy and the environment. I am convinced that it is on a European scale that we will manage to achieve this. The progress made in the first five months of the French Presidency of the European Union consolidates my conviction.



First and foremost, thanks to the initiatives of the Slovenian Presidency, thanks to the constructive work undertaken with the Parliament, we have adopted two important regulations, awaited impatiently by the airlines. These two regulations concern the computerised reservation systems and airport charges.

France's aim, during the six months of the EU Presidency, is to further the construction of a Unique European Airspace, based on

- 1) More efficient management of the European air navigation services network, restructured around functional transborder airspace blocks (FAB);
- 2) Pursuit of the SESAR programme to modernise navigation systems;
- 3) Revision of the first regulations package on the "Unique European Airspace";
- 4) Extension of the European Agency for Air Security (AESA) competences.

1. Construction of the Unique European Airspace aims to improve performance of air control in Europe. This improvement involves the creation of new functional airspace blocks incorporating national airspaces. A large number of countries have already undertaken this initiative.

I insist heavily on this point as in general, European airspace is too parcelled out, lengthening trajectories and increasing flight times and costs. As a result, between Milan and Amsterdam, due to a lack of integration of our airspaces, the journey is lengthened by 155 km per flight, representing 448 Kg of additional fuel for each aircraft and of course, more time for passengers.

Due to our geographical situation, the intensity of traffic and existing interfaces, particularly with the Maastricht and Switzerland control centres in the pipeline, it was logical for France to combine with its neighbouring states. The "FAB Europe Central" project brings together our airspace with that of Benelux, Germany and Switzerland. This association will be beneficial in terms of security, environment, capacity and especially cost reduction.

In the current economic climate, airspace block creation is ever-more justified. I understand why transporters are so impatient to see FABs become operational.

This is why the "FAB Europe Central" project has my entire support. For its rapid implementation, it must be carried forward by every partner state. This is the subject of the declaration of intent, signed during this summit. With this declaration, the civil and military authorities of the six "FABEC" states undertake to work together to implement the legal, technical and operational conditions of the FAB, until a definitive agreement



is reached in 2010. But already the seven air navigation service providers concerned, (the Eurocontrol air navigation centre in Maastricht is also included in this FAB), are springing into action to generate short and long term improvements. The cooperation agreement they have also signed at this summit specifies the establishment of a common budget to finance the foreseen projects. Therefore as of tomorrow, Thursday, the interfaces between the Paris and Maastricht centres will be optimised to benefit users. As they informed you yesterday, these service providers wish to act as a single entity. This shows the path to follow, as well as the quality of relations between partners in the Europe Central FAB, in which I place a great deal of hope and confidence.

Of course, this integration of service providers is likely to engender other movements and initiatives. This is the case in particular for operator surveillance organisation. The national surveillance authorities will have to study their methods for integrating service provision.

2. The Unique Airspace also implies the modernisation of technical air navigation systems. This is why we attach so much importance to the Unique Airspace technical component: the SESAR programme. The European Parliament has always given us its backing in this field.

At the Council of Ministers on 9 October, we validated work in the definition phase of this programme and we launched the development phase and allowed industrials to join the joint undertaking, which will be inaugurated on 8 December in Brussels.

This fundamental project will follow the guidelines set by the ATM Master Plan which is also about to be approved.

France wishes to participate fully in this programme: the French air navigation services have applied to join the joint undertaking. They would like to contribute all their expertise and knowledge to the SESAR project by dedicating the lion's share of their R&D capacities.

3. Next, we will revise the first "Unique Airspace" package from 2004. The French Presidency will do all it can for the Council of Ministers to adopt an orientation text introducing economic regulations founded on the performance of the air navigation services and a global approach to the air route network strategy. I am convinced that general guidelines from the 9 December Council are within reach. I would ask everyone to move in this direction.



4. Finally, we are currently considering the proposition to extend the competences of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), in control of the safety of airfields and behind the management of air traffic. Taking into account the tight links between the different components of the package, it is desirable for their study to progress in parallel. By the end of the year I would like us to answer the legitimate questions made by the member states as to the implementation of this text. We would like its consideration to be furthered and to establish a roadmap in order to facilitate the work of the forthcoming Presidencies: I am of course thinking of our Czech and Swedish friends.

Concerning the SESAR programme, I have insisted on the need to coordinate our efforts in terms of research and development of new technologies. It is indispensable that European countries continue to unite their technical, human and financial capabilities. Europe has adopted a proactive policy in this direction, with the creation of the ACARE and launch of the "Clean Sky" project. The reinforcement of the competitiveness of our aeronautics industry, the aims to reduce noise pollution, CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions as defined by ACARE, compel us to rally our resources and research efforts as much as possible.

This is why France has created, based on the model of the European ACARE, the Strategic Council for Aeronautics Research (CORAC). Working in full cooperation within the CORAC, air transport players, (constructors, air lines, airports, etc.), are in the process of defining together the technological roadmap to direct research over the next ten years and guide the allocation of French public aid.

Furthermore, these aims to reduce pollution and in favour of sustainable development will only be reached by including aviation in the emission rights market mechanism, the ETS (Emissions Trading Scheme). The directive that has just been adopted on the subject will be applicable in 2012. I say it loud and clear: the compromise reached in June for this file seems very reasonable to me. By 2012 we must define the terms for its implementation and rally the most important third countries. We will need to convince our partners at the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to progressively extend this measure to a world scale. This must be our priority.

Yesterday, I listened of course to the speech by Jean-Cyril Spinetta, who was concerned about a possible progression of auctioning levels in the framework of the general directive. It is of course imperative that this system does not lead us to question the fragile economic balance of the European air transport sector.



In particular it must not prevent companies from renewing their fleets. I will therefore attempt to ensure that auctioning does not compromise the competitiveness of the air transport sector. The first objective must be to modernise fleets – the only way to truly reduce CO2 emissions. Particular effort must be made for the short and long haulers, aircraft known as “single-aisle”: there are great expectations on the European and world level for new models.

This is one of the numerous challenges the sector must face over the years to come. However, the progression of the European programmes gives me confidence in Europe’s ability to meet them; to overcome the crises that I mentioned at the beginning. By uniting our forces, we will permit our corporations to maintain their technical leadership and their competitiveness on the world stage.

France will move towards meeting this objective in the last weeks of its European Presidency and I know that you have all worked towards this aim throughout the summit.

Thank you for your attention.