



# Newsletter 23-12

## CONTENT:

- Dominique Lazarski steps down as UECNA President
- UECNA webinars to resume
- Influencing the European Parliament
- Dutch plans to cut flight numbers at Schiphol suspended, BUT...
- Citizens and environmentalists demonstrate at Brussels Airport
- Electric taxis may not be used for Paris Olympics
- Spain to restrict short-haul flights
- Strategic noise mapping problems in Greece

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## **DOMINIQUE LAZARSKI STEPS DOWN AS UECNA PRESIDENT**



Here you see the UECNA Board Members who were in Brussels at the AGM on October 28.

[TOP](#)

## **UECNA WEBINARS TO RESUME**



UECNA's popular webinars will resume in 2024.

The first one will be on **31<sup>st</sup> January** 2024

**Topic: The potential of rail to replace short-haul flights**

It will be given by our new President, John Stewart, who before becoming involved in aviation campaigning, had a long career working in public transport.

The second one will be on **4<sup>th</sup> March** 2024

**Topic: The Balanced Approach**

UECNA new Board Member Matt Poelmans will explain this important policy. It is the international policy which outlines the procedures national governments and airports must follow if they want to reduce the number of flights at an airport on behalf of noise.

They will take place at 18.00 hrs (CET).

To register for the webinars go to our website [uecna.eu](https://uecna.eu).

A recording of all the webinars goes up on the UECNA website.



Elections for the European Parliament will take place from 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024. UECNA will be emailing the political groupings in the European Parliament. We will be calling for the next Parliament to take measures to tackle aircraft noise.

Our key demands will be:

- Significant investment in rail alternatives
- A cap on the number of planes permitted to use an airport each year
- A ban on night flights at most airports
- The introduction of tax on aviation fuel (currently untaxed) plus a ticket tax (already used in some countries)



- The Balanced Approach becomes more flexible. At present airports and governments can only restrict flight numbers as a last resort. If they want to cut noise, they must do other things first.
- making aeroplanes quieter by setting noise standards;
- managing the land around airports in a sustainable way;
- adapting operational procedures to reduce the noise impact on the ground; and
- introducing operating restrictions.

We believe that the Balanced Approach needs to become more flexible. Since individual aircraft are expected to become only marginally quieter, it is essential that more emphasis is given to the introduction of improved operational procedures and tighter operational restrictions.

## **What you can do**

It is worth finding out which political parties are standing in your country. Each party will have an email address. It will be useful if you could email them about aircraft noise. Feel free to use the points we have made:

**You can read more about the European elections here:**

<https://elections.europa.eu/en/>

TOP

## **DUTCH PLANS TO CUT FLIGHT NUMBERS AT SCHIPHOL SUSPENDED, BUT...**



Facing pressure from the U.S. government and the European Union, the Dutch government has suspended its plan to cap the maximum number of flights at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport per March 2024 from **500,000** to **460,000**.

The European Commission is of the opinion that a Balanced Approach procedure should have been followed to stop tolerating too much aircraft noise. The Dutch minister did not want to get into too much of a fight about this, because six months later he will need a green signal from the Commission to reduce to **452,500** flights. A Balanced Approach is indeed used for this reduction. This is expected to proceed carefully according to plan and then no one can stop the cap.

So the current “win” for the aviation sector, including the Dutch subsidiary of Air France-KLM (AIRF.PA), and US airlines, including Delta (DAL.N) and JetBlue (JBLU.O) will not last long. The Government wants to cut the noise for residents. The Netherlands is in the process of forming a new Government following last month’s local elections. But it is not expected to reverse the shrinkage. After all, the threat of lawsuits is still in the air.

## CITIZENS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS DEMONSTRATE AT BRUSSELS AIRPORT



Last month over 600 people from more than 22 Flemish & French-speaking community and environmental associations marched against the expansion of Brussels Airport. They demanded night flights be abolished; the overall number of flights be limited & binding targets on noise & emissions be imposed.

[TOP](#)

## ELECTRIC TAXIS MAY NOT BE USED FOR PARIS OLYMPICS



Electric flying taxis may not fly over Paris during next year's Olympics after the city council rejected the pioneering scheme as noisy, elitist and pointless. But the President of the Paris region is still considering a €1m subsidy for the Vertiport. The flying taxi industry had hoped that the Olympics would be the first major event where they could showcase their planes.

[TOP](#)

## **SPAIN TO RESTRICT SHORT-HAUL FLIGHTS**





The new coalition Government in Spain wants to ban domestic short-haul flights where there is a rail alternative that takes no more than 2.5 hours. Most of the flights affected would be internal flights to and from Madrid. Spain is currently upgrading its railways. France and Austria already have some restrictions on short-haul flights. You can read more about what Spain is planning [here](#).

TOP

## STRATEGIC NOISE MAPPING PROBLEMS IN GREECE



*By Eleftheria Emfietzi RN, MSc Public Health Officer, Local Councillor of the Municipality of Spata-Artemis*

In Greece the strategic noise maps required by the European Commission to serve as a source of information for citizens and as a basis for the development of action plans have not been published since 2016. Nothing was published in 2021, as it should have been. This should not be ignored.

### **Athens Airport - what is missing from the latest Noise Action Plan**

The minimum requirements for action plans for Athens Airport are missing from the proposed 2022 Noise Action Plan:

- No noise reduction target and measurable SMART results.
- No clear alignment in setting long-term noise reduction strategies, priorities and targets.
- There is no cost-benefit or effectiveness study of noise mitigation measures and the feasibility of their use, calculating the number of people affected by each action and this being thoroughly evaluated.
- There is a lack of evidence to quantify the effectiveness and value of the interventions outlined in the Noise Action Plans. In the presented tables, it is not explained how a claimed improvement in the noise experienced by the population is recorded, since there have been no technical improvements that justify this reduction, and it is not explained according to which technical or other tool this was achieved, which makes us doubt that the data are true.

The Action Plan could reduce exposure to noise with measures such as soundproofing systems, in the high nuisance zones, but at present these are minimal. Therefore, such an intervention would be easy and, in our opinion, relatively low-cost, but this does not happen. Additional actions should be adopted by the competent authorities. No actions such as traffic and land use redesign, design of technical measures at noise sources, selection of quieter sources to reduce sound, measures to transport affected population, regulatory or financial measures or incentives, appear to be adopted by the competent authorities in the New AP of 2022, since the measures that the competent authorities intend to take in the next five years to improve the acoustic burden are not analyzed.

### **Local and regional authorities continue to fail**

The consultation time given was minimal and the overall handling in the Municipality of Spata-Artemis, regarding the procedures carried out to ensure a rebuttal of the upcoming noise pollution study of the airport "El. Venizelos" and the corresponding control of the effectiveness of the proposed action plans for the region of our Municipality, was carried out in the absence of the majority of citizens. Behind "closed doors", without transparency and with selected participants (a group of self-appointed as the sole representatives of the citizens). These two events hindered the existence of transparency and our actions for our unhindered participation in the consultation, although our involvement with environmental noise in local authorities is known, a fact that constitutes a deficit of democracy.

[TOP](#)

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