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Boosting European Airport Capacity Needs Maintenance-Free Airport Infrastructure

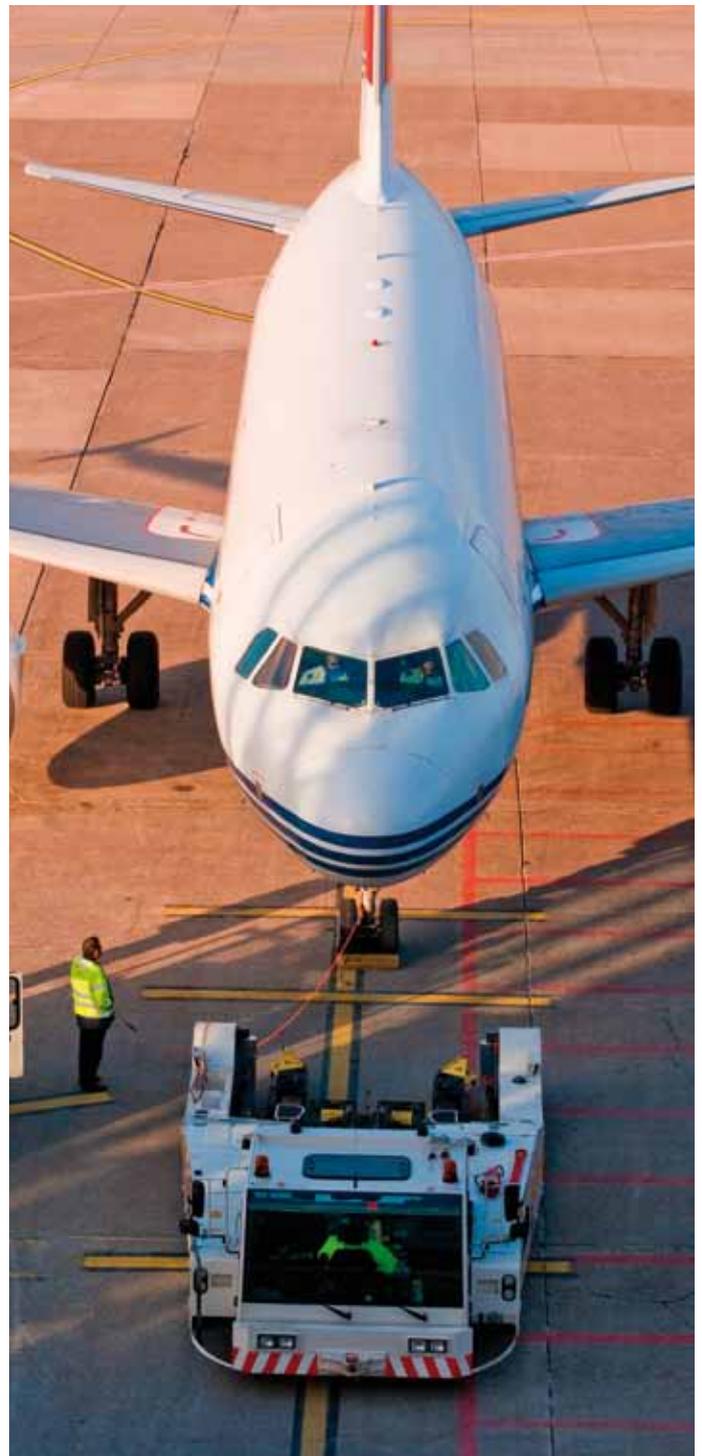
A study calling for an extra 28 million passengers a year to use European airports underlines the need for long-term, maintenance free runways, taxiways and aprons.

The EU study, by an independent transport planning consultancy, believes that the millions of extra passengers could be accommodated if landing and take-off slots were allocated to airlines more efficiently. It states that the problem of airport congestion will worsen because many busy airports, including London Heathrow, have no plans for runway expansion.

The study focuses on the way that airport slots are allocated to airlines using a criteria that often includes 'historic preference' which tends to favour traditional airlines. This means that new airlines can find it difficult to get slots. Recommendations from the study include EU-wide secondary trading of airport slots which would allow airlines to sell the slots that they cannot use.

Increasing slot efficiency may help increase capacity by improving the number of slot availability. However, increasing airport capacity this way will underline the need for airports to ensure that their runways and taxiways are able to at operate at full capacity without disruption caused by unplanned maintenance.

Increasing capacity without building new runways means that airports will rely more heavily on the long-term, maintenance-free performance of concrete pavements. These pavements have particular resistance to fuel spillage damage and heat damage from engine blast, and provide high load bearing capacity to cope with new and heavier aircraft. The long-life performance of concrete pavements means reduced unplanned maintenance. Increasing slot efficiency must be met with increased efficiency and performance of airport infrastructure.





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