

AERONAUTICAL DAYS 2011, Madrid

30 March – 1 April 2011

Innovation for a Sustainable Aviation in a Global Environment

Speech of VP Kallas in the Opening Session

30 March 2011 10.00 – 10.45 h

Welcome Address

I am delighted to be here with you today and I thank Ms Cristina Garmendia and the Ministry for Science and Innovation and its agency CDTI for organising this important conference with the European Commission.

The presence of so many participants from all stakeholder groups, policy makers as well as industry representatives and researchers, shows that we are at an important crossroads.

Aviation has had a decade of ups and downs, but overall it has been a tremendous success story for Europe. This would not have been possible without the sector's splendid ability and readiness to adapt to a changing environment, to innovate, and to take risks.

But we are not yet where we need to be. We still have to achieve our ambitious 2020 targets and the longer term future will bring even more demanding challenges. We need to be prepared. More importantly, we in Europe need to be ready to lead the change.

Firstly, we need to complete what we have started. We have launched a demanding innovation process in air transport and aeronautics in Europe and we need to deliver. This conference offers you a comprehensive snapshot on the ongoing research activities and their achievements so far, and I am pleased to see so much interest also from representatives outside the European Union. As they say, we vote with our feet! I take this as a positive signal that we are on the right track.

Secondly, it is time to look beyond immediate concerns and to build further on our commitments. 2050 looks far away but in the time scales of innovation, development and deployment, this is tomorrow. And we have a serious issue to address. Air traffic management still operates today with technologies which were developed in the middle of the last century, and unsurprisingly we face a lot of congestion and delay as a creaking system tries to accommodate ever rising demand. Meanwhile, we are now investing in the aircraft which will be flying well into the 2030s and longer – but we face more and more uncertainty about whether we will have sufficient conventional fuel to supply all transport needs. Aviation also needs to reduce its impact on climate change, of course. New markets are emerging with new competitors as well as potential partners. Safety and security remain top on the agenda.

That's why we need a new vision of how to address these many challenges.

Earlier this week, on Monday, the Commission published its new Transport Road Map for the European Transport Policy, and you will find aviation prominently included.

Today I bring you the new European vision 2050 from the industrial, research and innovation perspective. The report "Flightpath 2050 – Europe's Vision for Aviation" has been established by a group of high-level representatives from the European aviation industry which I invited, together with my colleague Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, Commissioner for Research and Innovation, to look at the long term needs for aviation.

Why is this so important? I am sure I don't need to tell you. But aviation counts. It brings together a diverse aeronautics industry and supply chain of strategic importance, a marriage of large and small enterprises across Europe and beyond. And transport is vital not just to our personal mobility and freedom, it is central to our entire economy. Transport – and air transport - is not just a business: it must deliver for citizens and business.

To illustrate with an example: the Single European Sky and SESAR.

SESAR, the Single European Sky air traffic management research programme, of course is the European public-private partnership to prepare the modernisation of the air traffic management infrastructure. The SESAR Joint Undertaking manages this well organised programme for research, development and validation, involving many of you. However, we cannot rest there. We need to go one important step further. We need to implement and deploy. We need to get the successful developments to the market. This is one of my core priorities.

It is not just the lessons we must draw from last year's ash cloud crisis, from the snow of last winter. We have to tackle the constant grind of daily aviation delays, which everyone in Europe has to endure. This defines how passengers, how our *citizens*, our *voters* will measure our success. And of course, it is the fuel savings, the additional transport services, the overall costs (and by the way, the additional emission reductions), which will be the proof of the pudding for service providers.

We have a clear commitment of Member States at the political level to this vital project. The Single European Sky integrates regulation, performance targets, technology, the human factor and infrastructure. By 2014 we will realise savings of more than one billion Euros, and CO2 emissions will be reduced by 500,000 tons a year starting 2012.

But let me also highlight the role of stakeholders in this context. You are the ones who will make it happen. You are the ones to benefit, but – it is also true – you will also carry much of the risks. So it is doubly useful to hear your views at this conference.

Let me not bypass the essential international dimension. We have just signed the EU-US Memorandum of Cooperation on civil aviation research. At the moment we have the opportunity together with the United States to show the world what a good SESAR-NextGen partnership can deliver. Interoperability is the watch-word – and this is not just a technical term. For airlines it means paying or saving millions, if not billions of Euros, and setting high quality global standards will provide new market opportunities for our industries.

There are also other programmes to complete: for example the Clean Sky Joint Technology Initiative which is an important element in our efforts to reduce CO2 emissions. And of course the massive ongoing efforts in other research projects and initiatives from the Framework Programme which will be presented during the three days of this conference.

In addition, we also need to be prepared for the unexpected, look beyond our ongoing programmes and be open for innovation, also from other sectors such as energy, information and communication technologies or materials.

The vision 2050 describes the main challenges for aeronautics and aviation. It sketches a scenario of the future and it proposes concrete goals for European industry and technology performance which will need considerable efforts in research and development.

I would like to invite you to read the Vision 2050 and the Transport Road Map, our new White Paper, carefully. They set the frame for the next steps to take. I invite you to work together to make it a reality.

Technology and innovation are key to the solutions for the future. The expectations are high and whatever we do or do not do, our actions will have a long lasting impact.

I am pleased that the Aerodays 2011 will again show that our strength lies in our combined efforts and our ability to connect with partners across the globe.

I look forward to hearing a detailed account of your deliberations over the next three days, and I hope you all benefit from enjoyable, interesting and lively discussions!

Thank you for your attention