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Articles / Aufsätze

Munich Airport's Third Runway and Stakeholder Communications

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Abstract. *Airports create many benefits for their regions, but they also put a great burden on residents and communities in the near vicinity. The environmental impact is considerable. Naturally, growth and expansion plans for airports quickly generate controversy and resistance. Munich Airport (MUC), Germany's second-largest airport after Frankfurt, has long planned to construct a third 4 km runway to increase capacity and ensure MUC's position in a fiercely competitive aviation market. A 2012 citizen referendum has stopped these plans.*

This article examines the needs, instruments, limits and potentials of airport communications with its key stakeholders, using the example of MUC, in the context of the runway project. It finds that innovative means opened up important channels for communication and citizen participation, but partly failed because of the inherent political conflicts between the airport and neighboring communities which prevented consensus. Efforts of information and dialog are not sufficient to win public support. More active mobilization of citizen, business and media support is necessary to put voiceful opposition at bay.

Keywords: Airport expansion, air transport, infrastructure, Germany, Munich, community advisory council, NIMBY, noise, project management, protest, public acceptance, stakeholder communications, stakeholder management

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Introduction

Munich Airport started its operations in 1939 in Riem, Eastern Munich, under the name München-Riem Airport. As the airport expanded, the vicinity to the city of Munich became a problem and operations were moved to an area called Erdinger Moos, which is located 28,5 km northeast of the City Center, in 1992. Plans for this new airport went back to 1969. Along with the relocation, the name was changed to "Flughafen München Franz Josef Strauß," named after a legendary Bavarian premier. More commonly in the aviation community, it simply goes by its IATA code, MUC.

The airport – via the Flughafen München GmbH (FMG) – is a public enterprise, co-owned by the State of Bavaria (51%),

the Federal Republic of Germany (26%) and the City of Munich (23%) (FMG, 2014a). Today, Munich is Germany's second-busiest passenger airport and ranks sixth in Europe with 38.4 million passengers and around 400.000 take-offs and landings in 2012 (FMG, 2013a).

Due to an increasing tendency in passenger numbers and resulting capacity restrictions, the airport in 2005 released plans to build a new runway, in addition to the two existing ones. Ever since, this project has been an conflict-laden issue between the airport, society and politics. As of this writing, no consensual agreement has been reached. The runway is steeped in controversy.

MUC Expansion Plan

Munich Airport serves around 38 million passengers and 398,000 flight movements a year (FMG, 2014b). It currently operates two terminals. Terminal 1 has a capacity of around 20 million passengers a year. Its younger sister, Terminal 2, is a joint venture between Flughafen München GmbH and Deutsche Lufthansa, with Lufthansa having a 40 percent stake in the joint venture (Terminal 2, 2014). Operations started in 2003. The terminal has a capacity of 20-25 million passengers a year. All Star Alliance member or partner airlines operate from Terminal 2. Due to capacity shortages, a satellite terminal is currently under construction, enlarging passenger capacity for Munich's Terminal 2 by around 11 million passengers. Terminal 2 and the satellite will be connected via a suburban passway. There will be 52 gates and 27 new aircraft parking positions, which is double the number of gate parking positions today (FMG, 2014c).

MUC manages two parallel runways, which are both 4,000 meters long, 60 meters wide and 2,300 meters apart from each other, which allows simultaneous operations. In optimal weather conditions, the minimum clearance between two landing aircraft is 4.6 km and 5.5 km between two departing aircraft (FMG, 2014d), which makes a maximum slot capacity of 90 movements per hour (ACI, 2011). Between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. night curfew regulations apply and only very restricted operations are possible (Boeing, 2011).

The third runway

Since 1992, the first year of MUC operations at the Erdinger Moos, the number of passengers has tripled. Until the year

2025 experts expect 58.2 million passengers per year to fly in and out of Munich. It is not only the number of passengers that is expected to increase, but also the volume of air cargo.

Already today, at peak times, MUC's two-runway system faces considerable capacity problems and no additional slots could be allocated anymore. According to the management of Munich Airport, the traffic forecast for 2025 exceeds today's airport capacity, which means that airlines are not keen on adding destinations or flights at Munich Airport and the acquisition of new airlines as customers is difficult, as free slots only exist during off-peak times – which is not very attractive for the customers.

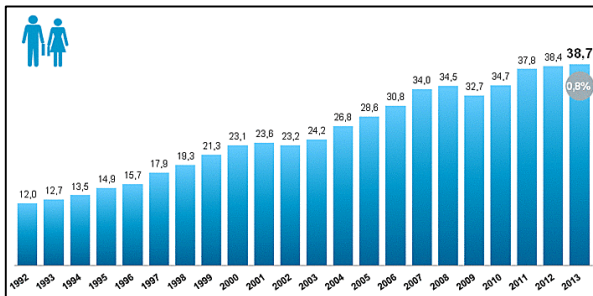


Figure 1. Commercial passengers at Munich Airport by year, 1992-2013, in millions (FMG, 2014n).

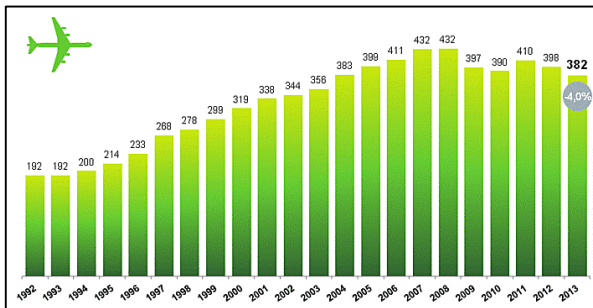


Figure 2. Air transport movements (ATM) at Munich Airport by year, 1992-2013, in thousands (FMG, 2014o).

In 2005, this perspective led MUC's supervisory board to the decision to build a third runway. The dimensions of the new runway are the same as the dimensions of the two existing ones: 4,000 meters long and 60 meters wide. The lateral distance will be 1,180 meters with a 2,100 meters offset in relation to the existing runway system in north eastern direction (FMG, 2014e).

The position of the new runway was chosen from 25 possible locations. All of those possibilities were evaluated regarding noise and environmental aspects. With the third runway, the slot capacity would increase to 120 flight movements per hour (FMG, 2014f). The costs of the project are estimated at €1.2 billion (Airliners, 2013). According to the airport, the third runway is essential to stay competitive and strengthen MUC's position as an international hub, as more and more passengers choose MUC as a transfer airport, mainly due to its minimum connecting time of 30 minutes (FMG, 2014g; FMG, 2014h).

The expansion plans were handed over to the state's district government of Upper Bavaria (Oberbayern)¹ which reviewed the documents and authorized the plans in 2007. After authorization the documents were published, which was followed by almost 60.000 official objections by affected citizens. In the upcoming years, all objections were reviewed and counterarguments were compiled by the airport. The documents again were submitted to the government of Upper Bavaria, which in

2011 gave permission for the construction of the third runway after having evaluated all aspects of the project. In detail, the permission includes the following: the third runway can be built and operations under all weather conditions and in both directions are authorized. The night curfew between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. is also valid for the third runway. The construction plans also include technical measures such as an instrument landing system (ILS) or an additional apron with 78 parking positions (FMG, 2014i).



Figure 3. MUC from the South. Terminal 1 is to the left, Terminal 2 at the right. The third runway would be added to the Northeast (upper right). The city of Freising is seen in the background in the upper far left (Hennies, 2003).

Furthermore, the airport is obliged to make sure that adequate compensation measures are undertaken. For example, the airport has to provide an area of around 908 hectares where compensation measures regarding flora, fauna, soil and running waters can be conducted (Regierung von Oberbayern, 2011). This permission could have been followed by an instant start of the construction works, however the airport expected legal claims and did not start right away (FMG, 2014j).

A referendum stops the runway

In June 2012 a referendum ("Bürgerentscheid") in Munich asked citizens to say yes or no to the city's support for the runway. Citizen groups, environmental groups, the Greens and other left-of-center parties campaigned for a no vote. A particularly active coalition is "Aktionsbündnis Aufge-MUCKt," an anti-expansion alliance founded in 2006 of over 80 organizations from counties next to the airport.

They succeeded: A surprisingly clear majority of 54 percent voted against the new runway, with 32 percent of eligible citizens participating in the referendum. The referendum, in which all of the citizens of Munich but not surrounding counties could vote, was to clarify the position of Munich, as one of three shareholders of the airport company FMG, towards the project. The referendum has the same legal force as a city council vote. As a result, the city, in the name of its citizens, put a hold to the project by veto. Since all three shareholders must be unanimous in the runway construction decision, the project was effectively stopped despite the pro-expansion attitude of the two remaining shareholders, i.e. the Bavarian state and the federal government. They are still convinced that the expansion is inevitable (Sueddeutsche.de, 2012).

By law, the referendum was binding for the Munich city administration only for one year. This lock-up period has passed. The city council is legally free again in its decisions concerning the project. Politically, however, it is a different matter. Policy-makers would certainly think twice before they act against a clear citizens' majority vote. Airport CEO Michael Kerkloh said the referendum was not "the last word." Future

¹ This government, "Regierung von Oberbayern" is an administrative district authority of the federal state of Bavaria. It covers 20 counties (Landkreise) and three self-administrating cities (kreisfreie Städte). The district government is an interface between the Bavarian state ministries and the county and municipal level. It is not headed by an elected official but a president appointed by the state.

generations of public representatives could view the issues differently. The decisive question was, stated Kerkloh, for how long the city would politically feel bound by the citizens' vote (Welt, 2012). This is indeed a delicate question, given that the state and the federal government are still in favor of expansion and seemingly look for ways to circumvent the local blockade. It was telling that Munich mayor Christian Ude, a Social Democrat and runway supporter, stressed he accepted the result, "no ifs, no buts," and expressly warned against anyone trying to use "back doors" and "tricks" to cheat on the citizens' will (Sueddeutsche.de, 2012; Welt, 2012). He was, it must be said, positioning his party in the view of coming state (2013) and local (2014) elections. After the elections, things may change.

On a different track, citizens' objections and legal challenges to government decisions continued to move through the court system. On March 20, 2013, the Bavarian Administrative Court opened proceedings in what became known as the "Startbahnprozess," or runway trial. The court had to examine whether the building permit was legally correct. The outcome of the referendum has no legal influence on the case (Airliners, 2013). The airport communicated that if the judicial review of the building permit came to a positive result, it expected that political hurdles would eventually be overcome. The runway's permit can be put on hold for 15 years and activated when political conditions allow (dapd, 2013).

On February 19, 2014, the Bavarian Administrative Court delivered its verdict: All 17 complaints were dismissed, all legal costs were imposed on the plaintiffs, and further appeals ruled out. Municipalities and environmental groups which had been among complainants announced they would file an appeal against denial of leave to appeal at the Federal Administrative Court. The judge found no fault with the governmental planning resolution. He did not accept claims that the airport runway was unneeded and airport forecasts were false, nor that environmental hazards or natural conservation objectives could block construction. The courtroom was packed not only with prominent politicians and reporters but with hundreds of angry protesters who interrupted proceedings, singing the Bavarian anthem and chanting "We are the people" (a refrain from the East German revolution of 1989). Police forced protesters from the courtroom (Kirchberger, 2014).

The Airport's Stakeholders

Figure 1 shows the airport's stakeholders according to Munich Airport itself. In the following, different stakeholder groups and their interest concerning the project will be examined. The term stakeholders describes those groups which are affected economically, environmentally and socially by the airport's operations (Andriof & Waddock, 2002, p. 26).

An airport has a lot of impact on its direct environment. On the one hand, there is a harmful impact through noise, air pollution, waste, traffic congestion, and loss of natural habitats and biodiversity. Such ecological impacts are clearly negative. They require compensation and careful handling by the airport. On the other hand, an airport can add value to a region by creating jobs, business income, tax revenues, and mobility. For all these impacts, positive and negative, an airport has to answer its central stakeholders.

Stakeholder communication, as the topic of this article and in this particular case, is crucial when there is strong opposition to a strategic project. The group of stakeholders with the most ambiguous relationship to the airport is probably the residents in close vicinity of the airport, or the region. Although they may profit from the airport when going on holiday or business travel or when being employed by the airport, they have to live with the constant noise and pollution.



Figure 3. Munich Airport's central stakeholders. Official stakeholder map, adapted from FMG (2014k)

The second stakeholder group is made up of business partners, airlines, tenants and service providers. Naturally, their interests considering the building project are very similar to those of the airport. If the airport's business is good, then their business usually has good prospects, too.

The airlines want safe and smooth on-time operations, which can be more easily assured if the airport's capacity is larger. At the same time, airlines aim at extending their destination portfolio, which, of course, only is possible with spare airport capacity.

Governmental bodies and associations are interested in ensuring safe air traffic operations. On a local level, they also aim at ensuring economic growth for the region, which can gain benefits by growth of air traffic, as additional destinations are offered and more people will visit the region. On the other hand, the local governmental bodies are also interested in minimizing noise and emissions for the region and making it more liveable (FMG, 2014k).

When looking at ministries and governmental authorities on the federal level, one has to take a closer look at the public-private initiative "Luftverkehr für Deutschland" (Air Traffic for Germany), founded in 2003. Among its members are airports Flughafen München GmbH (FMG) and Flughafen Frankfurt AG (Fraport), airlines Deutsche Lufthansa AG and Air Berlin, Deutsche Flugsicherung GmbH (DFS, a federal government-owned company organized under private law and responsible for all air traffic control), and the air transport industry's umbrella association BDL, Bundesverband der Deutschen Luftverkehrswirtschaft. The initiative aims at strengthening Germany's competitiveness in international aviation as well as at a sustainable development of the air transport industry (BDL, 2014).

Another very important stakeholder group are the passengers. As customers and users of a public infrastructure utility, their main interest is to get from A to B as quickly and conveniently as possible (Schaar & Sherry, 2010, p. 3). Finally, the media also are a stakeholder. Opponents and supporters of the third runway project use diverse media for conveying their specific interests, mobilize the public and influence politics. The media also serve as an intermediary between the airport and the public (Biesiadecka, 2009, p. 268).

Between all of these stakeholder groups there might be conflicting overlaps, such as employees who are simultaneously passengers and residents in the airport region.

Stakeholder communication

According to the airport, the ongoing communication and dialog with its stakeholders is an important and highly valued part of the company's daily business. Hence, the airport conducts surveys of employees and passengers on a regular basis, for example.

There is an extra department in charge of communication with the region and surrounding communities and their citizens. Part of the regular dialog organized by the airport is a serial event called "Flughafenforum", which is a semi-annual information and communication forum event where neighboring communities and the airport discuss questions regarding economic and traffic related development.

Originating in this communication instrument, the airport has created a platform for dialog and discussion between the airport and the region accompanying the third runway project in 2005 with the purpose to include the region in the whole planning and construction process. This platform is the neighborhood community advisory council, or "Nachbarschaftsbeirat." It has around 40 representatives from industrial and commercial stakeholders, labor unions, municipalities, administrative authorities and citizen groups with the common goal to achieve a solution that fits the airport's as well as the region's and its inhabitants' needs. The advisory council was not set up to discuss the merits of the third runway but rather to mitigate its consequences and provide a semi-formal arena for negotiations. It runs its own Internet site (nachbarschaftsbeirat.de).

Initially, citizen groups founded with the clear purpose to oppose the third runway were also at the table. They declared their withdrawal from the council in 2011: In their mind, there was no room for compromise, and they did not want to be a fig leaf for the airport's expansion plans. The council's activities were limited to questions regarding road and rail communication of the airport as well as how compensation money for municipalities and local organizations would be spent in case of the third runway's construction. Compensatory funds amount up to €100 million, which will only be used for measures exceeding the airport's legal obligation. When the opposition citizen groups left the body out of protest, they also gave up an opportunity to influence, or even gain from, this spending. It has thus been clear that no decision would be able to satisfy both supporters and opponents of the runway project (Nachbarschaftsbeirat, 2014).

Airport communications also include monthly reports concerning the airport's noise and pollutant emissions, as well as a permanent hotline for complaints regarding noise. Additionally, the airport offers road shows regarding the progress of the third runway project or on-demand discussion events with stakeholders. However, the progressing plans to build a third runway prompted several citizen groups to stop their participation in regular discussion events.

Regarding government and politics as well as sector lobby groups, the airport takes a participative approach. It is a member of diverse groups and bodies, and it cooperates closely with aviation industry and travel/tourism associations. Its Political Affairs staff unit is in regular consultation with representatives of European and German politics. Those activities enable a constant exchange of information and policy positions regarding future projects (FMG, 2014).

Analysis and assessment

The difficulty in this particular discussion is that the biggest part of the project's opponents are resident citizens. Naturally, their major concern is the loss of quality of life – and loss of residential property value. There are communities that, with a third runway, would be affected in a much stronger way by noise and air pollution than they are today, as the distance between the communities and the runways would become smaller. Local leaders, town planners, business bodies and

residents fear that their towns' future development would be restricted by airport facility construction and zoning, and that they become unattractive, even "uninhabitable." Collectively and individually, citizens fear and protest significant impairments in their daily lives (Kirchberger, Dritte Startbahn: Ortsteile unbewohnbar, 2013).

The problem that arises here is something very typical for large construction projects: usually nobody wants them in his near environment. Apart from the question whether a runway, a power plant or a factory is important for the prosperity and infrastructure of a region, nobody wants to be burdened personally with the negative aspects of such a project, like noise and air pollution or destruction of the scenery, to name a few. The phenomenon is commonly known as NIMBY, which stands for "not in my backyard." NIMBY protests may ally with more fundamentalist anti-growth opposition.

Munich Airport has decided, based on traffic forecasts, that a third runway is the only chance to stay globally competitive in the long-term future. Such a project, with estimated costs of €1.2 billion, has to be based on economic facts and arguments. The airport, for example, emphasizes the creation of thousands of new employment opportunities at the airport. It also warns that no more slots are available at peak times, which can lead to a loss of airlines to other airports – and thus to a loss of income and jobs. Another economic argument is that the project will be wholly financed out of profits and cash flows from ongoing operations rather than by taxpayers' money (Schwendner, 2014).

Those arguments may be true and quite airtight, however they are all very rationalistic and technocratic, and they point to broader regional rather than personal benefits. They cannot devitalize the main opposition arguments: too much noise pollution, loss of quality of life and destruction of nature. These are also factual, but they mobilize people on more emotional and personal basis. The key factor is fear of negative change: opponents perceive serious risks, or more concretely for the locals, threats to their own way of life and the character of their communities. They see their protest as personal and collective defense against attacks from an external enemy. Under threat, communities may find common cause, close ranks in solidarity and fiercely fight back, tending to frame themselves in an all-or-nothing, life-or-death fundamentalist mindset. Accusations that they place their own well-being over the region's common good may even make them feel vindicated.

Basically, the fundamentalist argumentation on both sides is not likely to ever reach a perfect middle point which would satisfy all parties. A compromise which secures the economic benefits and mitigates risks and burdens is only possible when some acceptance of a need to compromise, and of a need to legitimately place a burden on a minority for the benefit of a majority, is perceived by large parts of the public. It has to be convinced that the region needs the third runway and that – in balanced judgment and social justice – the benefits carry more weight than the disadvantages. This cannot be reached by presenting mere facts (Althaus, 2014, forthcoming).

It must be said that the airport has not gone over the heads of its neighbors – even though some of the locals may negatively perceive it that way. At the very beginning of the process, the airport realized that the public, especially the neighboring communities, are a vital part of the runway project. The advisory council ("Nachbarschaftsbeirat") was a good and innovative approach, as it was meant to encourage dialog and participation, and by that secure transparency and good relationships between the parties (Biesiadecka, 2009, p. 244).

The council offered a two-way communication channel. The airport set out to fully inform the council in all details. In response, the council articulated citizen concerns, demands, wishes, recommendations and ideas to the airport which could then be transferred to operational planning. While the council never had any decision-making power, it has political weight. Its leadership has a political role to play as a moderator and

facilitator of conflicting interests – to engineer consensus through dialog wherever possible, to keep discussions constructive, and prevent communication crises. It was, of course, clear from the start that an accord would not be reached with everyone on everything (Biesiadecka, 2009, p. 245).

Indeed, it did not. The council was unable to engineer a consensus. If it was meant to be a crisis prevention instrument, it failed, since it did not prevent a major setback in the whole process: the referendum. The referendum and its outcome certainly is a substantial crisis for the project and the airport.

Opponents saw the council as what it was, a consensus-generating body which would support the runway project. Whatever participation and communication was possible here, in the end the council was not a place to stop the runway. Opponents sought alternative political means which could result in decisions, not just advice and consultation which may be deemed meaningless. One alternative was to work through the representative parliamentary and party channels. However, the airport enjoyed broad support among major and minor parties (Christian Socialists, Social Democrats, Free Democrats, Free Voters and Bavarian Party, but not the Greens). When politicians' project support could not be broken, they turned to instruments of direct democracy.

The referendum has its own problems with questionable legitimacy, however. Citizen opinions do not all count with equal weight, or not at all: The referendum was a tool in the body politic and under the territorial authority of the City of Munich. This means that only Munich citizens could vote. They made a decision on instructing the city leadership as owners of the airport company. But the airport is located about 30 km northeast of the city center. The residents who will be affected most by the project do not live in the city of Munich, but in municipalities in the outer county. Munich citizens thus decided over the fate of outsiders who had no direct voice.

Even after the negative outcome of the referendum, the airport management is sticking to the expansion plans, backed by the non-city shareholders. According to airport CEO Michael Kerkloh, the project was authorized by the government and has been adjudicated; what becomes of the runway is only a question of how long the City of Munich feels politically bound to the referendum (Welt, 2012).

This kind of positioning flies in the face of the promise that civic participation is guaranteed. For critics, participation looks pro forma only. The process seemed exclusively in the hands of an elite of policy-makers, airport managers and technocrats. If the outcome of the participatory process is not open but already fixed beforehand, and citizens feel their opinion does not matter, this leads to even bigger opposition among the public as the people feel betrayed (Althaus, 2014, forthcoming, p. 7). One strong motive for protest is not feeling involved in decision-making and perceiving a pretense of public participation (Banthien, 2012, p. 136).

Beyond dialog: Mobilizing public support

The construction of an airport or an additional runway for an airport located close to populated areas has never been a project without strong opposition. This is just part of the deal. However, coping with opposition in the right way can lead to much more acceptance among the public.

In many cases, when looking at the big picture, the opposition may not be more numerous but simply louder. The opposition also has a higher chance of mobilizing people to action. This is quite natural for the psychological and political reasons discussed above. Collective benefits will be spread out over many, but burdens and threats hit a very concrete part of the population. They may combine with a small but influential ideological opposition to airport and air traffic growth.

Generally, opponents are just easier to find. They are more visible, as they have a stronger incentive to go public, are more passionate about their goals, and might have a lot more to lose

in case of a realization of the project than the supporters if the project is not realized.

To supporters, too, it may often seem that they are in the minority and opponents in the majority. This again might keep people who are in favor of the project from making their opinion public, which could convince and mobilize other supporters. Voiceful opposition may have a demobilizing effect on the supporters and sympathizers.

For the airport, this means that dialog is only half the answer. Dialog does not mobilize for political action. Consultative and deliberative practices do not, by themselves, make supporters speak up and take on a forceful opposition campaign. That is the problem with a controversial construction project. Dialog cannot fully prevent organized opposition and their resort to use legal and political tools to delay. Despite broad stakeholder communications, the airport at the end of the day relies on the ability of government and political leaders to force the runway decision on the opposing minority.

What airports are not used to, but could do, is try to mobilize its supporters who do not dare to go public because it might seem that they will be alone with their opinion. The airport, as the one in charge for the project, could intervene by extending its stakeholder communications to include a campaign-style plan to rally public support. The challenge is to identify those who are in favor of the plans and mobilize them to go public with their opinion to find other supporters. Effectively, the airport should convince them to lobby, organize petitions, write letters to politicians, market the runway idea via social media and word-of-mouth – in other words, engage with their neighbors over the fence in support of the airport's plan.

However, it is mostly not sufficient to mobilize supporters based on economic-rational arguments alone. They have to be touched emotionally and find personal enthusiasm about this project in order to spread enthusiasm. The airport cannot shy away from developing popular, catchy messages. The task at hand is not only to create a positive opinion climate for the project but to create citizen action supporting it.

Frankfurt airport has attempted to implement such a campaign during the discussion regarding its own expansion plans ("JA zu FRA"). In an initiative with airlines Deutsche Lufthansa and Condor Flugdienst, Fraport managed to motivate citizens to post pictures of their holidays on the airport initiative's website, or shoot little clips where they announced their support in personal testimonials (Ja zu FRA, 2014). While Frankfurt's campaign has its limits and controversies, this active approach aims at making supporters' voices stronger in the public's perception. It aims at making clear that there are more supporters than one might assume. In the best case, there are even more supporters than opponents (Althaus, 2014, forthcoming, p. 24).

It is not only the supporters among the citizenry that should be mobilized but also those in business. Entrepreneurs, managers, employers and employees directly linked to the airport's success can have a role to play – making abstract economic arguments more concrete, personal, and relevant. In the worldwide ranking of exporting countries, Bavaria ranks on position 24. The fastest and most economic way of accessing interesting new markets such as Brazil, India or China is by air traffic and therefore the airport plays a major role in Bavaria's economy (FMG, 2014m). The support from linked economic sectors in the ongoing discussion has been rather poor, even though many companies are dependent on daily air connections to the rest of the world. Munich airport CEO Kerkloh complained publicly about the lack of visible support from economic stakeholders. "We know that our expansion project has many fans in business," Kerkloh stated. "But many of them were not there when it counted" (Welt, 2012).

Hence, the airport needs to encourage these companies to publicly announce their favorable disposition toward the third runway. The priority is not to create slick advertising cam-

paigns with money from interested business but rather to present a credible voice from real people. These might be, but are not limited to, CEOs stating a personal opinion what the runway means for their business and the people who work for their company. It requires that they are motivated to do so.

All of these aspects are closely knit with the necessity to use various media in a much more effective way, i.e. through advertising, videos, print ads in newspapers or radio messages, online media, and the like. Visibility comes through media.

Conclusion

As this articles has shown, the discussion over the project has been going on for around eight years and has been characterized by sharp conflicts between the public and the airport that could not have been solved but have only become worse. The basis for a trustful relationship between the airport and parts of the public has been destroyed and seems irrecoverable

at the moment. The airport's image has suffered greatly. Authorization of the construction plans may come soon; it is very likely that it is just a matter of time that the airport will add the third runway. But protests will not stop any time soon. The construction itself will spark new confrontations. It is up to the airport to draw the right lessons from the records of partial success and partial failure of its stakeholder communications construct not only the runway, but repair the damage and build a supportive environment for future construction and operations.

Links

- ➔ Munich Airport: www.munich-airport.de
- ➔ MUC expansion / third runway: www.muc-ausbau.de
- ➔ Citizen coalition "Aktionsbündnis AufgeMUCkt": <http://keine-startbahn3.de>

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