

Press Release

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Europe's aviation sector comes together to address industry challenges

- More than 350 aviation professionals from 170 companies including 44 airlines have made their way to Innsbruck, Austria, for the European Regions Airline Association (ERA) General Assembly, taking place 10–12 October.
- With discussions centred around collaboration as the key to overcome industry challenges, yesterday marked the first day of the event's successful conference sessions.

ERA's General Assembly is the highlight of the association's calendar, and this week delegates from across the European aviation community have met to enjoy this exclusive member gathering. As part of this, today marked the start of the event's conference sessions, hosting two senior leadership panels that allowed for thought-provoking discussions on the current most pressing issues for the association's members.

ERA recognises that industry collaboration is an essential element that will ensure our industry's future success and stability. Therefore, the first conference session, titled 'The power of a collaborative approach', saw discussions focus on how the entire aviation ecosystem can work in partnership with vital industry stakeholders to deliver an efficient and sustainable air transportation system to meet consumer demands.

Jesper Rungholm, CEO, DAT Group, who moderated the first conference session, said: "To survive as part of an industry that is both loved, needed and by some even hated, we have to collaborate. All parts in this intricate machine need to deliver their part. Without the airports and manufacturers doing their bit, the airlines will not be able to reach the ambitious goals we all both want and are willing to achieve. But overall, we need the politicians to understand that they are also part of this collaboration and act accordingly. It has been a pleasure to lead discussions on how we can, together, chart a course towards progress and propel regional aviation into a future that is both sustainable and prosperous."

Panellist Mary Considine, CEO, The Shannon Airport Group, said: "I was delighted to be part of today's ERA General Assembly conference and to have an opportunity to discuss the power of collaboration with fellow aviation industry stakeholders from across Europe. Collaboration in our sector isn't just a choice, it is essential if we are to grasp opportunities. It is our compass to navigate the winds of change and the fuel for future innovations. Many interesting points were raised today, among these, how the development of smaller regional aviation networks in Europe should form part of our strategic thinking and help us on our goal of developing a greener aviation industry."

* Founded in 1980, European Regions Airline Association (ERA) is a non-profit trade association representing over 55 airlines plus around 150 other 150 companies involved in European air transport, and is the only association that bring together the entire spectrum of companies involved in European aviation. The association supports and defends the airline industry in providing safe, efficient and sustainable air connectivity to all regions of Europe. By lobbying European regulatory bodies on policy matters, ERA promotes and protects social responsibility, environmental sustainability and the development of regional economies and local communities.

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The conference session emphasised that sustainability in the airline industry hinges on collaboration among all stakeholders, stressing the importance of an educational campaign to foster understanding and encourage governments to establish a unified policy for immediate action towards a sustainable future.

With sustainability having dominated both headlines and discussions for several years, the second conference session took the chance to reflect on the various challenges threatening our business. Aptly named 'The challenges ahead beyond sustainability', topics included skills shortages, boosting regional connectivity, supply chain, competition and consolidation.

Wouter van Wersch, Executive Vice President, Region and Sales – Europe, Airbus, moderated the session. He reflected: "As we move towards a more sustainable future for aviation, let's not lose sight of the pressing issue of the global skills shortage, both in crew and engineering. It is people who drive our industry, and we must invest in their development."

Jiri Marek, CEO, Air Serbia said: "As we continue our commitment to sustainability, we recognise that addressing skills shortages is a paramount challenge in our industry. We are dedicated to investing in comprehensive training programmes and partnerships to equip our workforce with the skills needed to navigate the evolving landscape of aviation. Together, we aim to overcome these challenges and ensure a sustainable future for our airline and the planet."

Additional high-level speakers and presenters included: Teresa Gonçalves, CEO, Azores Airlines; Mark Anzur, CEO, Air Montenegro; Patrick Edmond, Managing Director, Altair Advisory; Haldane Dodd, Executive Director, ATAG; Christopher Holgate-Romanov, Head of Department – Strategy & Programmes, EASA; Conor McCarthy, Executive Chairman, Emerald Airlines; Tanja Grobotek, Director European Affairs, CANSO Europe; Arjan Meijer, President and CEO, Embraer Commercial Aviation; and Maarten Koopmans, Managing Director, KLM Cityhopper.

During the latter part of the conference session, the panel discussed numerous challenges facing the aviation industry, encompassing factors such as skills, training, cybersecurity, competition, consolidation, and supply chain. They unanimously stressed the vital role of national authorities and European regulators in providing increased support, particularly through incentives aligned with the expectations and requirements of the next generation of aviators to secure the industry's future.

For the full agenda, visit the [ERA website](#).

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