

**“Wherever a new runway or new airport is planned it is meeting with well-organised and well-informed opposition”**

# **A Sea of Protest across Europe**



**Residents occupy terminal in Frankfurt**

**Thousands take to the streets in Berlin**

**Protesters in Nantes go on 28 day hunger strike**



**A HACAN publication exposing the myth that it is only in the UK that there is effective opposition to airport expansion**

# Effective Protesting

Over the last few years Europe has been awash with protests against new airports and new runways. And a new type of protester is emerging with a new style of campaigning which is stopping expansion plans.

## The Roll Call of Protest

**Heathrow:** Third runway dropped, along with new runways at Stansted and Gatwick, by new Government in 2010 following a decade of protest.

**Frankfurt:** Since the 4<sup>th</sup> runway opened in October 2011, up to 5,000 residents have occupied the terminal every Monday evening in protest against the impact of the new flight paths, with larger protests taking place on many weekends.

**Munich:** A 3<sup>rd</sup> runway was stopped in its tracks when the citizens of Munich voted against it in a city-wide referendum following high-profile protests.

**Berlin:** Thousands of people have taken to the streets in protest against the proposed new airport on the outskirts of the city.

**Nantes:** The long-running battle against a new airport at Nantes in SW France captured the international headlines during the recent presidential election when farmers went on a 28 day hunger strike in protest against the seizure of their land.

**Siena:** Plans for a new airport outside Siena in the beautiful Tuscan countryside of North Italy were defeated after a long campaign by local people.

**Viterbo:** Plans for a huge new airport at the Viterbo Air Force Base, some 40 miles north west of Rome, have been dropped following a campaign involving academics, many social movements and environmental and human rights groups.

**Vienna:** Despite major concessions by the airport challenges to plans for the long-planned but unpopular third runway continue.

## Dropped in 2012



A 3<sup>rd</sup> runway in Munich

A new airport in Siena

A new airport in Viterbo



Both pictures: Munich campaigners celebrating

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Meet the new protesters**

## France: hunger strikes and mass protests

The long-running campaign against the proposed Nantes International Airport in South West France became an issue during the Presidential Elections when protesters went on a 28 day hunger strike....



The long-running battle to stop a new Nantes airport being built took a dramatic turn during the Presidential elections when farmers went on a 28 day hunger strike in protest against the seizure of their land. They were visited by a number of the presidential candidates. All bar Sarkozy and Hollande came out against the airport. But when Hollande became President he declared that the land could not be seized until all legal processes had been exhausted, expected to take at least another 2 years. The fight against the airport has attracted international attention. In July people came from all over Europe as the enterprising Nantes campaigners hosted the European Forum against Useless Projects to coincide with their annual July protest: (below).



## Italy: Campaigners 2 Airports 0

In 2012 plans for two new airports have been dropped after persistent local campaigns. Protesters saw off attempts to build an airport in the Tuscany countryside close to Siena (left) and in Viterbo, 40 miles outside Rome. But the situation in Italy is far from clear. Half the country's airports are up for sale. There are rumours that Viterbo might still come back into play to ease the pressure on Ciampino Airport where there are loud protests about noise. Siena, however, won't be coming back as many of the leading figures behind it are facing criminal charges!

# Germany in Revolt

The most spectacular actions have taken place in Frankfurt and Munich but there also have been protests Dusseldorf, Leipzig and Cologne and huge rallies in Berlin.



In August protesters holidayed in the terminal!

## Frankfurt: The authorities never saw it coming

There had been a lot of opposition, including direct action protests, while the 4<sup>th</sup> runway at Frankfurt was being built but, when Angela Merkel opened it in October 2011, the airport thought it was all over. How wrong they were! Every Monday evening since then up to 5,000 residents have occupied the terminal. They set up their own stage and sound system and make speeches, sing songs and stage colourful stunts. Other protests they have organised have attracted over 15,000 people. These are respectable citizens, devastated by the way the flight paths have changed their lives. The authorities don't know what to

do with them. They've already conceded a partial night-time ban. And now the CSU, the senior party in the regional coalition government, fighting for its life over its support for the new runway, is hinting it might press for fewer planes on the runway. (The campaigners are calling for it to be closed). National and regional elections take place in 2013 where the runway will be an issue. Whatever else they achieve, the protesters have ensured another runway at Frankfurt will never even be considered!

The authorities weren't alone in failing to see the protest coming. Most campaigners outside Frankfurt also assumed the protests would be over once the runway was opened. The campaigners intend to carry on their protest until at least the elections of 2013. But it is difficult to see them going away: most of them simply won't tolerate a plane going over their homes one every 90 seconds when once they had peace and quiet.

Earlier this summer Angela Merkel had to be given a heavy police guard when she attended the retirement ceremony for Frankfurt's Mayor, Petra Roth, a supporter of the runway. Protestors clashed with the police as around 1,000 people tuned up, setting off sparklers and throwing foam balls, eager to confront the German Chancellor.

## Videos:

The first video, from Spiegel TV, includes footage of the impact of the runway on residents. The second shows the residents singing their protest theme song...in the terminal

<http://spon.de/ve5Uz>

<http://youtu.be/oPL-GnmTla0>

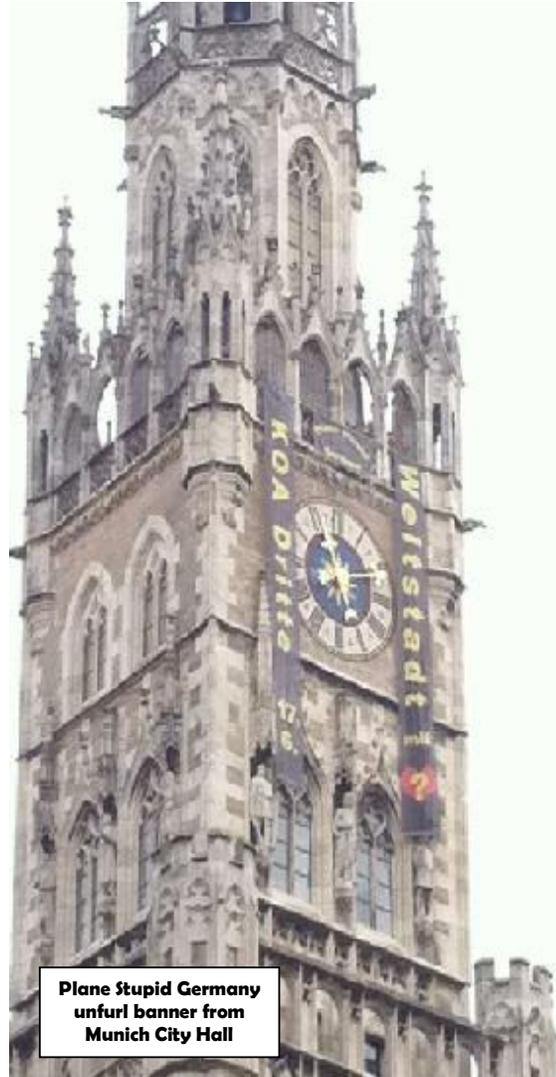


In the summer Frankfurt protesters were joined by campaigners from across Germany as over 8,000 formed a human chain on the bridges over the River Main

# Germany in Revolt

## Munich: City-wide referendum throws out 3<sup>rd</sup> runway

On 17<sup>th</sup> June the people of **Munich** voted 54% - 47% against a 3<sup>rd</sup> runway in a city-wide referendum in a snub to the authorities. The result was a victory for a very impressive campaign which brought together climate activists, led by Young Friends of the Earth Bavaria, with local residents. Their activities ranged from a spectacular banner drop by Plane Stupid Germany (right) to moving candle-lit church services. They also commissioned work from consultants give them solid economic arguments against the need for the runway. The referendum is binding for a year but, with elections due next year, it will be difficult for the authorities to back a 3<sup>rd</sup> runway.



Plane Stupid Germany unfurl banner from Munich City Hall

## Berlin: thousands take to the streets



Munich's Florian Šperk introduces John Stewart of AirportWatch to a Berlin rally as campaigners forge new links.

Rallies and marches against the new edge-of-town **Berlin** airport due to open next year have drawn thousands of people. Left, a rally in Berlin City Centre.

### Videos

Munich campaigners picnic and sing in the terminal  
<http://youtu.be/6B2juC4FhtY>

Campaigners protest on a wet day in Berlin  
<http://youtu.be/TSPLoXv5f-Q>

# Meet the new protesters

The protests are very different from the earlier protests against airports. A new type of protesters is emerging using new types of campaigning tactics.

## Who are the new protesters?

In previous decades campaigns against airport expansion tended to be isolated and local, focused on noise and other local impacts. The new protests are very different. They are concerned not only with local impacts such as noise and community destruction but also with the wider issues of climate change and biodiversity. And they are beginning to challenge the economic need for the new runway or new airport. The campaigns at Heathrow, Nantes and Munich all commissioned their own economic studies. They are also raising wider questions such as the impact on demand of the tax-free fuel the aviation industry enjoys and the potential of high-speed rail and video-conferencing to cut demand.

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The range of issues being raised has made the campaigners much more diverse. Local people are being joined by experienced environmental campaigners and

activists as well as sympathetic politicians. But links are also being made with related campaigns – for example in Nantes there are strong links with the peasant farmers' movement. The wide-range of people involved in the campaigns means that they are increasingly well-informed, well-organised and politically aware. They also are prepared to use creative actions and social media in adopting a pro-active campaigning style.

## Unity within countries and across Europe

It would be an exaggeration to say there are no differences but there is the kind of working together that was largely absent 20 years ago. Many of the campaigners are in regular contact with each other. They attend each others' events. Over the last four years there have been two international campaign conferences. When the 3rd runway at Heathrow was dropped, many assumed the result was an aberration. It is now looking very different



*Given the opposition, the safest assumption is that airport capacity in Western Europe will remain much as it is now over the coming decades*

Although airports are still able to increase the number of aircraft on existing runways, it is becoming increasingly difficult to build new runways or new airports. Given the opposition, the safest assumption is that airport capacity in Western Europe will remain much as it is now over the coming decades.



Working together: German campaigners staged a nation-wide day of action

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