

Europe: Key Eco-friendly Measures of the Greenest Airports

In March 2013, ACI Europe reported that over 50% of European passengers were arriving at green, environmentally friendly airports – an encouraging sign that can only improve throughout 2014 as established schemes develop and new ideas are tried out.

Many European airports claim to be green and it is difficult to judge the 'greenest' of all so here are four important examples from across the continent who have shone through thanks to their bold or unusual methods.

One British airport is making a name for itself with its green, renewable energy sources. Back in November 2013, Heathrow in London won awards for its attempts in environmental sustainability; however, the UK's most famous airport does not quite have the same level of green credentials as one of the country's lesser airports – **East Midlands**. This airport has been impressing green organizations for years with its noise pollution programs and recycling scheme but it is the efforts towards green energy and fuel that have really impressed enthusiasts of environment-friendly policies.



The fuel for the terminal's heating system comes from willow that is specially grown on site. The airport achieved the Green Apple Award in 2011 after they installed wind turbines – the first UK airport to do so. The projects at EMA have been so successful that they also met their target of becoming carbon neutral by 2012.

Switzerland's **Zurich Airport** is tackling numerous issues inside the airport, even the water supply. There are many points on Zurich's environmental agenda – from the acknowledgement of noise pollution issues to the electronic billing system for waste materials. The airport even achieved the Airport Carbon Accreditation by the Airports Council International EUROPE.

While noise pollution may be at the top of the agenda – and seen as a key difference between this Swiss airport and its European neighbors – one of the more interesting elements to their grand scheme is actually their approach to the water that is used on site. The water management program not only reuses rain water for use in the toilets, it goes as far as purifying the water left over after de-icing the planes.

Over at Germany's new **Brandenburg Airport**, nature is being helped in an unusual way. Implementing new environmental measures in a well-established airport is one thing but over in Germany they are building a new airport with as many animal friendly zones as passenger friendly ones.



In addition to planting 1,300 lime trees in the surrounding area and working on the “ecological upgrading” of the Zülowniederung lowlands, designers are carefully managing the areas between the runways to make them less appealing to birds and limit avian fatalities. By removing trees, growing the grass long and encouraging foxes to deal with the small mammal population, it is hoped that birds of prey and migrating species will look elsewhere.

Last but not least, Sweden is showing the rest of the continent how to reach even further with environmental initiatives. **Stockholm-Arlanda Airport** is one of the clear leaders in green European airports; partly because it was the first to receive the Airports Council International EUROPE's highest honor and partly because of the ambition and scale of its projects.

The use of bio-fuel in the buildings and the aim of zero carbon emissions by 2020 are great examples of the airport's attitude; however, it is the work beyond the runways and terminal doors that is the most interesting.



As recently as January 7th 2014, a competition was announced to design a solution for reducing noise pollution in a nearby residential area and there is an ongoing project to make the transport links between Stockholm and Stockholm-Arlanda as green as possible. The airport shuttle buses are currently being run on rape seed oil and even the cabs are classed as “eco taxis”.

Becoming a green, environmentally-friendly airport is a key concern for many airports. There are plenty of other airports that could have been highlighted here but these four examples were chosen for the way they promote the details of their policies to the public, the wide focus of their agendas and that one key initiative that helps to set them apart. These four green airports have all thought outside the box in some way – wind turbines, birdstrike prevention, purifying de-iced water, green airport shuttles – but they also

show how easy it can be to reduce an airport's carbon footprint and act as an inspiration.

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