DUTCH SCIENTIST PROPOSES CIRCULAR RUNWAYS FOR AIRPORT EFFICIENCY

News / Airports / Routes



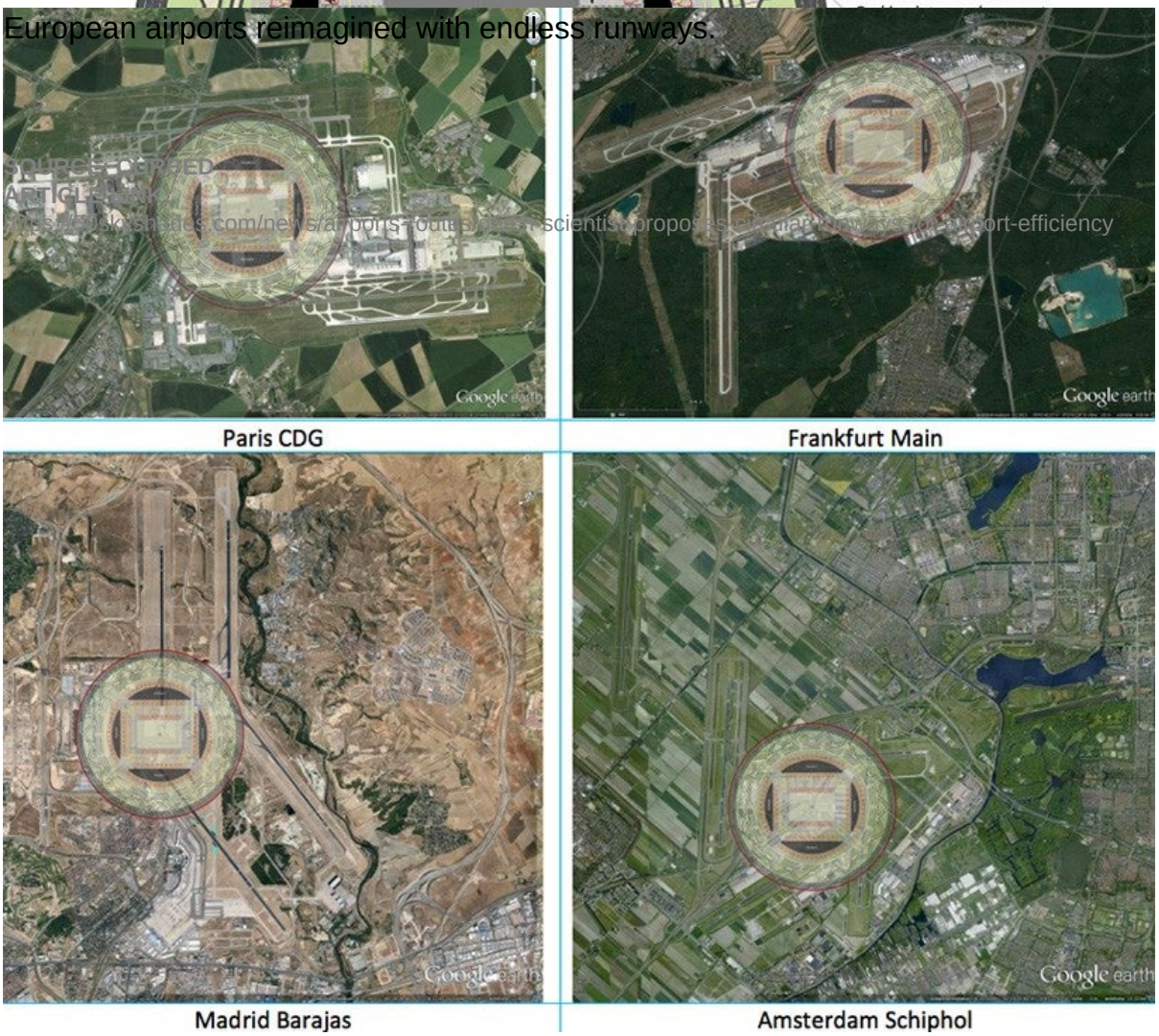
While airport terminal architecture has a solid history of style and innovation, rarely is a proposal put forth to utterly redesign the *runway*. But that's precisely the aim of Henk Hesselink, a Dutch scientist working with the Netherlands Aerospace Centre.

Dubbed the "endless runway", Hesselink's brainchild is a 360-degree landing strip measuring more than two miles in diameter. Since airplanes would be able to approach and take off from any direction around the proposed circle, they wouldn't have to fight against crosswinds. And three planes would be able to take off or land at the same time.

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Hesselink's team uses flight simulators and computerized calculations to test the unconventional design, and have determined that round airports would be more efficient than existing layouts. With a central terminal, the airport would only use about a third of the land of the typical airport with the same airplane capacity.

And there's an added benefit for living near airports: Flight paths could be more distributed, and thereby making plane noise more tolerable. So far, there have been no plans to actually build a circular runway, but Hesselink's research continues on.



European airports reimagined with endless runways.

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