



## ALSACE'S AIR GATE - POINT OF VIEW OF CATHERINE TRAUTMANN

News / Airlines, Business aviation, Personalities



**It is always a special honour to find out most important on development tendencies from people who have significant experience luggage. This time we had an amazing opportunity to meet Mrs Catherine Trautmann, former mayor of Strasbourg, who is now Vice-president of Eurometropole, In charge of economic development and the international influence of Strasbourg European Coordinator for the TEN-T North Sea-Baltic Corridor. She has considerable experience within the European Institutions as a former Minister and has gathered broad experience in the transport field, regarding urban nodes – the urban tramway system for Strasbourg was developed during her time as mayor – high speed rail and Inland Waterways and ports. Mrs Trautmann was much involved in the financing and set-up of the TGV–Est high speed train link between Paris and Strasbourg.**

**Q. Mr Trautmann, as former mayor of Strasbourg, can you give us your vision - Strasbourg has been the European capital since 1949, what does it mean from the point of view of transport organization, including air transport? Was it a priority for the city?**

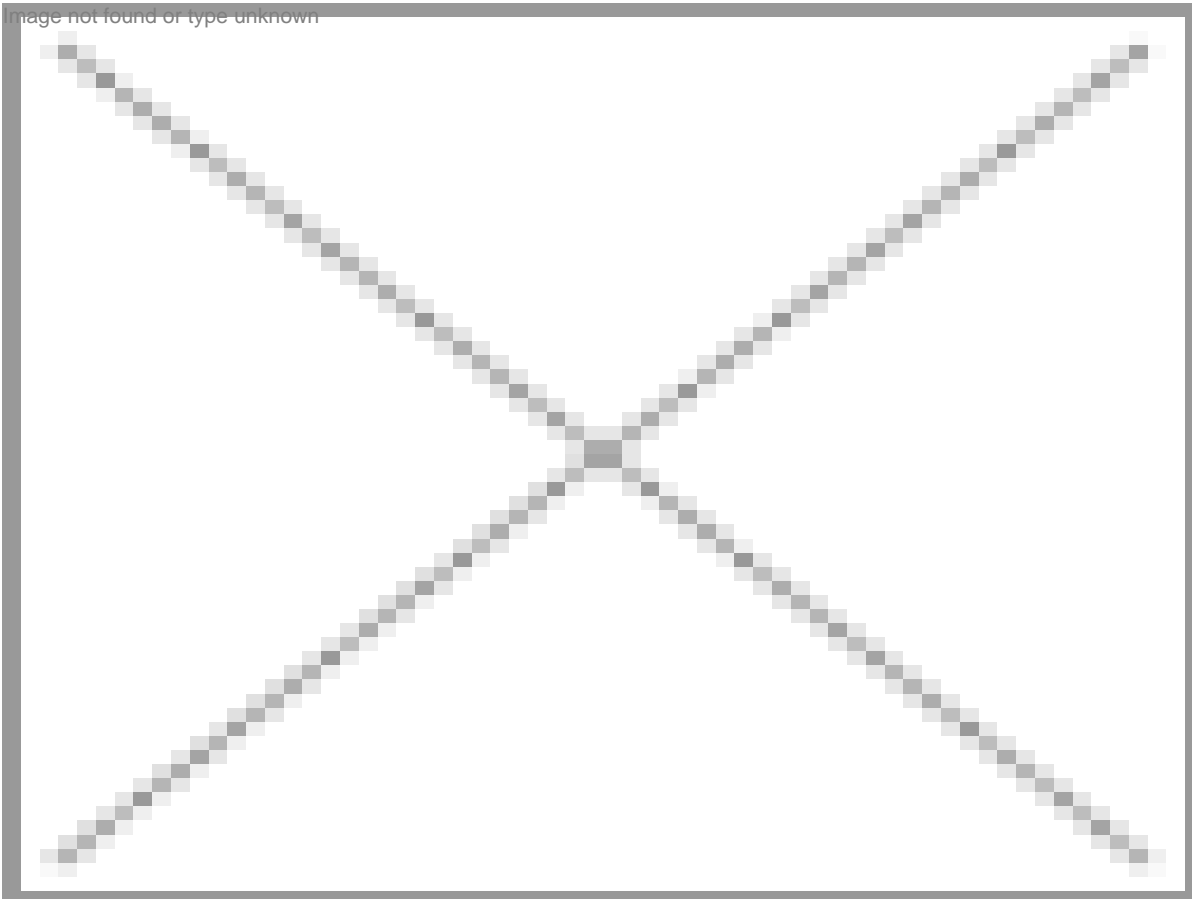
**A. Strasbourg has unique potential from transport organisation point of view – proximity to Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg. The fact of being second river port of France and uniting 4 European transport corridors – Atlantic, North Sea -Mediterranean, Scandinavian-Mediterranean and Rhine-Danube. So of course the development of transport was always a priority for the city. Regarding Strasbourg International Airport, back in the time it was a military**

airport. When I was the Mayor of Strasbourg there was a project to build new airport in the North of the city, but despite all efforts it has never become real. The face of Strasbourg International Airport has greatly changed over the years and the facilities available there today are both modern and convenient. However it is clear that air transport is a domain which requires a lot of work and dedication in order to develop it. With Strasbourg position a strong airport it is a must be.



**Q. The role of airport, air travel due to the number of European institutions and the fact that it is the second diplomatic city in France?**

A. Yes, Strasbourg is the headquarters for 21 EU institutions – most famous are European Parliament, Council of Europe, European Court of Human rights, Eurocorps. In the same time, no less than 30 consulates and 46 permanent representations (Embassies) of countries members of the Council of Europe are located in Strasbourg. All that means that we have to be a major hub of interconnections. Today we can't say that we are. Unfortunately. Last 4 years each year Strasbourg Airport is improving the offer – increasing number of destinations and passenger served, so the positive tendency is obvious. But we have to be able to offer regular air travel connection with European capitals to assure travel of EU institutions personal and diplomats. Sometimes time is extremely precious in the agenda and air travel is the fastest way to be in every place needed. Today their needs are solved by commercial, funded or special governmental flights. So, there is clearly a job to be done in order to develop the offer and achieve our goals.



**Q. There are always things that need to be improved. So what are next stages of development to better serve the EU and diplomatic institutions by air?**

A. As I told, we have to become a major hub of interconnections. And I mean not only using air travel. Strasbourg has opportunity to let travellers to combine travel by rail, automobile and air transport. But if we talk about aviation development, there is general, or business aviation that many years was left without much attention at Strasbourg. For many years that direction was far from being priority and even very actual from the development point of view. Now things are changed. Exactly in order to offer and assure the best offer for EU and diplomatic institutions the time is come to create the symbiosis of commercial and business aviation. The modern functional infrastructure for business aviation has to be created. Customized offer, based on a study in collaboration with interested party – clients. Working on creating the future offer we have to pay special attention to security questions. It is crucial exactly because of the intensity of diplomatic activity. Strasbourg is in fact the door to Big East, the entry point. We have to define Top destinations needed, create a unique offer adapter to needs and local conditions. I am sure Strasbourg Airport has real potential to become much more functional in order to offer leisure and business air travel not only to Alsace, but also to our neighbour regions of France and neighbour countries.

**VFLORU**

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