

Construction Measures for the A380 Superjumbo Require Separate Zoning Procedure; Fraport AG Hopes That Lufthansa Will Base Its New Quiet and Low-emission Widebody Jets at Frankfurt Airport

Frankfurt (ots) - Fraport AG Frankfurt Airport Services Worldwide will file a separate zoning request (project approval procedure or Planfeststellungsverfahren) for the construction of maintenance facilities and runway adaptations required for operating and maintaining the new Airbus A380 widebody jets at Frankfurt Airport (FRA). Deutsche Lufthansa AG has made it quite clear in recent weeks that it was indispensable for Fraport AG immediately to create the necessary legal conditions in terms of the planning required for zoning.

"We must meet this legitimate request for planning security of our main customer," said Fraport AG's executive board chairman, Dr. Wilhelm Bender. Fraport AG plans to file a zoning request for this project already in October of this year, separate from the zoning request for construction of the new runway.

The upgrading has nothing to do with expansion of the runway system. The A380 will be used in air transportation independent of FRA's expansion.

Being able to accommodate this type of aircraft and offering Lufthansa the basic conditions for stationing its A380 fleet at FRA is a sine qua non for Frankfurt Airport to ensure its future.

"By separating the approval procedure for this project from the partly disputed issue of expanding FRA's runway system, Fraport AG hopes to reach a consensus with all parties involved and thus immediately create the planning security which Lufthansa legitimately claims", said Prof. Manfred Schölch, Fraport's executive board vice chairman. "Ultimately, this project represents a vital step toward securing Frankfurt's future position in air transportation."

The required measures include, above all, construction of a maintenance hangar for Lufthansa's new superjumbo - including associated buildings and other facilities such as taxiways and parking areas - on an approximately 20 hectare site at the southern part of the airport.

Fraport points out that Frankfurt Airport is not only the central European hub for Lufthansa and its Star Alliance international partners but also its maintenance center.

"To maintain Frankfurt Airport's central function," Bender said, "Lufthansa must be able to operate the ordered A380 aircraft via FRA and to overhaul them here."

A particularly positive feature of the A380 is that despite being larger than the Boeing 747-400, currently the largest passenger aircraft, it will be quieter and less polluting. Lufthansa plans to take its first A380 into service in 2007. Some other airlines in the Star Alliance will operate this Airbus type starting 2006.

When the Markwald and Gundwald forest area between Rüsselsheim and Walldorf (near FRA) were recently declared a nature preserve, Fraport AG revised its planning so that construction of maintenance facilities would not touch this bird sanctuary. Thus, the planning area for maintenance facilities, considered in the Regional Planning Procedure (ROV or Raumordnungsverfahren), has been partly moved to the southeast by the airport operator.

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