

**Evidence given by Clive Soley to the London Assembly Environment Committee,  
22 January 2008**

Few people dispute that Heathrow is in decline relative to other competitor airports. In 1990 Heathrow could fly you to 227 destinations. Now it can only fly you to 180.

Frankfurt, now number one in Europe, can fly you to 304 destinations and has just announced the building of a fourth runway. The European bank is in Frankfurt and it is competing with London for international finance markets. It has world-class intermodal transport connections, rail, road and air. It is very well placed geographically, economically and politically to enhance its role with the full entry of the East European countries into the European Union. It is a major challenge to London as an international business and investment centre. It has a major advantage in a modern airport which can cope with demand without delays and with better international links.

Paris and Amsterdam are our other two key airport competitors and they have already modernised and expanded their air, rail and road links. Both airports can fly you to more UK city's than can Heathrow. Munich recently overtook Heathrow in destinations served. Unless we act soon Milan, Madrid and Rome will also overtake Heathrow.

I would ask the Environment Committee to take a long term and more visionary view of the transport needs of London in the newly emerging world economy.

The cities of the future have to be more sustainable but they also have to have high quality transport interchange facilities. We used to have that. We are now losing it. A very great deal depends on the outcome of the decisions being taken about Heathrow.

We need to get that decision right and to build a vision for London that sees the airport as a positive asset fuelling our prosperity and employment while meeting the environmental conditions laid down by the Government and the EU.

We need to stop seeing Heathrow as a problem that we could do without and recognise that it is a key part of our public transport infrastructure.

Ends

**Lord Clive Soley is the Campaign Director of Future Heathrow.**