

## **R11new No To Airport Expansions — Not in Barcelona, Not Anywhere**

Proposers:

Agenda item: 4. Resolutions

### **Motion text**

1 In the context of climate emergency, when science and activists worldwide are  
2 urging for the decarbonisation of the global economy, the transport sector plays  
3 a major role. Specifically, air transport requires a massive reformulation  
4 effort. Despite the warnings –and obviousness– regarding the high impact of  
5 aviation on the environment, the operators of several major European airports  
6 are putting forward expansion proposals. Scaling up these facilities is in line  
7 with a strategy of growth in the aviation sector that is in clear contradiction  
8 with the need for decarbonisation. These are consequences of our economic system  
9 and policies that are based on the exploitation of people and the environment.  
10 In this system, corporations are making profit at the expense of our rights to  
11 live in a healthy environment.

12 In Spain, the national airport operator AENA has put forward plans to expand  
13 virtually all major Spanish airports. In the case of Barcelona - El Prat  
14 Airport, the expansion project envisions a new terminal and the extension of one  
15 the airport's three runways, with the goal of reaching 70 million passengers per  
16 year by 2030. The airport is located right by the Llobregat Delta, a space of  
17 critical ecological importance within the dense, heavily urbanized Barcelona  
18 conurbation. There are several swamps and two main lagoons around the airport  
19 area, one of which would be removed to allocate the runway extension. Overall,  
20 the Barcelona Airport expansion project would generate the following negative  
21 impacts:

- 22 • Massive biodiversity loss, as 43 protected bird species, fish and reptiles  
23 would be deprived of their natural ecosystem
  
- 24 • Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions coming from airport operations would surge  
25 by 33%, which go in the opposite direction of international agreements to  
26 reduce drastically overall emissions by 2030
  
- 27 • Direct health impact due to air and noise pollution generated by airport

28 activity, such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, as well as an  
29 impact on the mental health of airport workers, passengers, and nearby  
30 residents; also, an indirect, global health impact from increased GHG  
31 emissions contributing to climate change worldwide should be considered.

- 32 • 10 million additional tourists would visit Barcelona annually, further  
33 increasing pressure on public services, and speeding up gentrification,  
34 directly impacting on the inhabitants' housing rights
  
- 35 • A model based on an unstoppable growth which benefits big companies  
36 fostering ecocide capitalism, undermining the very universal right to live  
37 in a habitable planet
  
- 38 • 1.7 billion euro would be lost to an unupdated and unsustainable transport  
39 system; instead this budget should be allocated to improve and expand the  
40 local rail network, with a focus on night trains and international  
41 connections—as of 2019, 54.5% of airport passengers could be provided with  
42 competitive rail alternatives

43 With this resolution, the Federation of Young European Greens:

- 44 • Call on the appropriate authorities and institutions to protect the  
45 environment and health by halting all expansion plans of all European  
46 airport operators, which constitute a threat for a green and just  
47 transition.
  
- 48 • Urge all European countries and institutions, specially those that are  
49 members of the European Union, to develop a competitive intra-european  
50 train network, creating new cross-border services through high-speed and  
51 night trains, with the goal of reducing airplane use.
  
- 52 • Urges the European Commission to revise the 2014 Aviation Guidelines,  
53 adopting new rules halting state aid to airlines, airports, and airport  
54 expansion and nonessential infrastructure investment projects of already  
55 developed airports, with the continued exemptions of 'very small airports'  
56 meeting the criteria to constitute a Service of General Economic Interest  
57 (SGEI) insofar a competitive train or sea alternative is not feasible

- 58 • Urges national European governments and European institutions to put  
59 forward a ban on air routes where a competitive rail alternative exists,  
60 as was already approved by France on national air routes where an  
61 alternative rail service with travel times under 2.5 hours is offered.  
62 Competitiveness shall also include an assessment based on costs alongside  
63 duration
  
- 64 • Call on the European Commission to create an air carbon tax that may be  
65 dynamically adjusted depending on the distance and the existence of  
66 competitive rail alternatives over the same route; the obtained revenue  
67 should be used to further develop competitive rail alternatives, with the  
68 intention to discourage frequent flying.
  
- 69 • Call on civil society and local governments on showing their discontent  
70 with such projects and claim for a green and just transition

### **Reason**

It may look like science fiction, but national administrations across Europe are still pushing for airport expansions. As air traffic is a major greenhouse gas (GHG) emitter, it makes no sense to keep subsidizing airlines and funding airport expansions; instead, all European institutions should coordinate to provide competitive rail alternatives on all major air routes across Europe. In the case of Barcelona Airport, the proposed expansion project envisions removing an entire lagoon in the Llobregat Delta, an area of the utmost ecological importance in the Barcelona metropolitan area.