

Report of 14th IARO Workshop: Bergamo Airport - 25 & 26 September 2017

Paul Le Blond reports on the 14th IARO Workshop held in Bergamo and Milan on 25 and 26 September 2017:

- A total of 25 delegates convened in Milan and Bergamo on Monday 25 and Tuesday 26 September, for the 14th IARO Workshop, covering developments in rail access at Malpensa and Bergamo Airports.
- The meeting started with a visit to the new Malpensa Terminal 2 Station which opened in December 2016. The rail link had been extended by 3 km from Terminal 1 and the new station has four platforms, designed to enable a later extension to create a ring line through the Airport. During construction, a number of historic artefacts were discovered and some of these will be displayed in the station hall.
- Participants rode on the Malpensa Express to Milan Centrale Station where there was a guided tour of the magnificent marble halls and a view inside the Kings Room, originally built for (but rarely used by) the Italian royal family. The tour then continued to Bergamo Airport, where delegates went up the control tower for a superb view over the airport.
- In the evening, SACBO (the owners and operators of Bergamo Airport) hosted a dinner in the rooftop restaurant of the San Marco Hotel, with another superb view, this time of the old walled city of Bergamo.
- The workshop took place at Bergamo Airport and opened with a welcome from the Mayor of Bergamo and the Airport Managing Director. The morning sessions concentrated on developments in the Lombardy Region beginning with Emira Lanari from the Lombardy Regional Government who gave an overview of road, rail and airport plans. Franciso Mstrini of SACBO, Giulio De Carli from One Works and Luca Bassani from RFI (the National Rail Infrastructure Manager) then gave more details of the Airport Master Plan and the options for a rail link to the Airport and improvements to the local rail network, including indications of possible service patterns.
- ICCSAI's Renato Redoni then introduced Sebastian Birolini whose research had developed a model for estimating rail share based on surveys of passenger behaviour. The morning session was completed by Andrew Sharp, IARO's Policy Advisor, who described a number of examples of different types of air rail links from around the world, including Medan in Indonesia which he had recently visited; and Montreal in Canada which he had studied for the Airport.
- After lunch, Fraser Brown, Heathrow Express Business Lead and Director (and current IARO President) described how Heathrow Express is dealing with changing markets, in particular with competition from Uber. Andy Saunders from the Manchester Airports Group described the current and future situations at Manchester Airport and how they plan to increase the rail and other public transport mode share and reduce private car and taxi activity. Finally, Martin Braun of IATA gave an airline perspective by giving an overview of the current airline sector and a reminder of why airlines' views should be taken into account when planning air rail links.
- Our thanks to SACBO and SEA for arranging and hosting this excellent workshop which, as usual, enabled delegates to meet and learn from examples around the world.