

Vienna Airport statement on the third runway project

Flughafen Wien AG has applied to the environmental impact authority for an extension of the implementation deadline for the third runway project which was definitively approved by the highest courts in 2020. This step is due to the long duration of appeal proceedings and the slump in flight traffic following the coronavirus pandemic.

Based on a decision handed down on 10 July 2012, the Provincial Government of Lower Austria, which serves as the environmental impact assessment authority, formally approved construction of a third runway at Vienna Airport. Numerous appeals were filed against this decision, and subsequently the highest courts in the country also took up the case. It took until 17 February 2020, or close to eight years later, for the last ruling to be handed down by the high court when the Federal Administrative Court gave the project the green light, definitively and incontestably.

Just a few weeks later, the coronavirus pandemic broke out which largely paralysed flight traffic for more than two years. This massively undermined the basis for project planning of the third runway.

A significant increase in flight traffic is first expected in the year 2023. Current forecasts predict about 75% of the flight movements and more than 80% of passenger volume compared to the record year of 2019.

These developments have made it necessary for Vienna Airport to apply to the environmental impact authority for an extension of the original implementation deadline. On the basis of the corresponding expert assessment, the application calls for the original implementation deadline of 31 December 2023 for the first phase of construction to be extended to 30 June 2033 and for all other deadlines to be adapted accordingly.

The deadline extension request is based on the appraisal of the expert that flight traffic will further increase in the future, and that the peak capacity of the current runway system will therefore be reached in the 2030s.

The application also underlines the fact that the airport operating company Flughafen Wien continues to vigorously pursue the third runway project. Extending the deadline will enable Flughafen Wien AG to align the actual start of construction to the actual development of flight traffic as well as profitability. In this regard, a precise point in time for beginning construction work cannot yet be specified.

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