Brussels, 28 July 2014

Greener airports thanks to EU-funded tech

Every summer millions of Europeans descend upon the continent's airports on their way to sunshine and adventure. As airport users explode in number, so does the cost and environmental footprint of running an airport. Did you know that as airports get bigger and bigger they each consume as much energy as small cities? Think only about the lighting, heating and air conditioning systems in these huge transport hubs. That is why European researchers have used Commission funding to develop a new software and sensor system to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs by 20% in airports. Pilot testing is taking place in Rome's **Fiumicino** and **Milan's Malpensa**. The new system, called **CASCADE**, will save these Italian airports at least some 6000 MWh, which equates to 42,000 tons of CO_2 and €840,000 a year.

Partners in Germany, Italy, Ireland and Serbia are working on the new system, supported by €2.6 million of EU funding. The Airports Council International Europe – representing over 450 airports on our continent – has committed its support to the project, meaning we will start to see wider use of this new system from 2015.

"*Sensors and meters are placed on the infrastructure and communicate information to a central database*, explains Nicolas Réhault, the coordinator of the [CASCADE](#) project [@CASCADE_ICT](#) at the [Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems](#) in Freiburg, Germany. "*Innovative software can detect [faults](#), for example fans operating when they are not required, simultaneous heating and cooling, control errors and so on. It can then suggest corrective actions to the energy management and maintenance teams, like resetting controls or replacing faulty detectors.*"

From Italian airports to the rest of Europe

"*With the knowledge we gain, we want to replicate the solution at other airports*", adds Nicolas Réhault.

Vice-President of the European Commission [@NeelieKroesEU](#), responsible for the [Digital Agenda](#), says: "*I travel often in my job, and I believe 100% that our airports need to become smarter and greener. The CASCADE system shows us that being sustainable doesn't have to cost a fortune, and that actually it can save us money.*"

And there will be other applications for the CASCADE system, as Nicolas Réhault comments: "*Airports are complex. We have gained a lot of know-how on how these infrastructures work. This can be replicated to other highly complex buildings such as hospitals and banks. And it could be downscaled to simpler things, too.*"

Read more about the [CASCADE](#) project (also in French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish).

Background

CASCADE project was awarded funding from the EU [seventh framework programme for research and technological development](#) [#FP7](#) (2007-2013). The new EU research and innovation programme [Horizon 2020](#) [#H2020](#) promises even more breakthroughs with €80 billion of funding available over the next 7 years (2014-2020).

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