

EUROCONTROL
Experimental Centre

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What image of ATM ?
An analysis of 2002-2003 European Press

Study report

EEC/SEE/2004/002

Portrayals of ATM in various major European newspapers

Study report

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Abstract: The press review analysis, limited to 7 national written newspapers in 4 countries, revealed as well a very limited interest for ATM/ATC, and highlighted the following findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a far more national coverage than European coverage of ATM/ATC matters - although ATC rarely appears as a separate topic, an apparent correlation between an accurate portrayal of controllers job, and objectivity of opinion, on specific events such as Constance Lake - regular report in the newspapers on environment problems caused buy Air traffic never call ATC in account This first exploratory work shows the need for a better account of society in the ATM community..						



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1. Introduction

1.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

GENERAL PROBLEMS

- A lack of transparency in air traffic control, combined with its low profile among the general public and the media, may pose a problem in a world where transparency and accountability are increasingly the “rules of the game” by which social actors must abide, and where the legitimacy of those who fail to comply is called into question.
- Understanding how public perceptions of this field are formed, so as to identify how the world of air traffic control can change them in future.
- The remit of this preliminary study is simply to analyse the main portrayals of air traffic control in several major organs of the quality European press.

1.2 FIELD OF STUDY

CORPUS

- The study has deliberately been limited to seven daily newspapers included in the daily Press Review conducted by the press service of the Cabinet of the Director General (Press Review, 2003 version): *Le Monde*, *Il Corriere Della Sera*, *Financial Times*, *The Times*, *Wall Street Journal Europe*, *L’Echo*, *Le Soir*, over various periods during 2002 and 2003.
- A more in-depth analysis of how public opinion on air traffic control is formed would obviously require a broader field of study, both in terms of the languages involved (German and Spanish-language press, etc.) and the types of print media (magazines, tabloid and regional press); it would also be advisable to study audiovisual media. (television news and reports, films and television films)

1.3 METHODOLOGY

A CONCENTRIC APPROACH

- Quantify the interest taken by these newspapers in the aviation sector, taking all themes together.
 - How many signed articles are devoted to the aviation sector each month?
- Identify areas of interest for each newspaper.
 - Which events trigger articles? Which topics are tackled in those articles?
- Describe the image portrayed of ATC
 - How is the Lake Constance collision handled?
 - How is the world of air traffic control portrayed, in general?
- Describe the image portrayed of problems caused by air traffic
 - How are environmental and noise-related themes handled?

1.4 FINDINGS

- An analysis of the themes covered demonstrates that ATC is rarely a subject in its own right
 - Air traffic control features above all by virtue of its failings
 - It features as a bit player in the economic/institutional and social problems of which it is a part
- A qualitative analysis of the portrayals of ATC reveals something of an image problem
 - Just as there is no European press, so there is no consistent perception of the issues surrounding European air traffic control
 - Where the portrayal is more concrete, judgements made when apportioning blame for accidents appear less negative
- The degree of maturity with which noise pollution is viewed varies greatly from one country to another
 - ATC bodies are never presented as actors in the control of air pollution
 - Only the British press mentions environmental pollution and proposes overall solutions

2. Coverage of the aviation sector

- The number of articles on the aviation sector, taking all themes together, varies greatly from one newspaper to another
 - The *Corriere Della Sera* provides detailed coverage of all developments in Milan and throughout Italy, averaging more than 30 signed articles per month
 - The *Financial Times* and *L'Echo* provide regular coverage of some national and European themes, averaging 15 signed articles per month
 - The other four newspapers cover the sector more sporadically, averaging less than 8 signed articles per month

- These averages, then, indicate marked trends which should be handled with care
 - The articles included in the Press Review have been selected and it is thus probable that they do not represent the full coverage of each newspaper
 - All the newspapers except *Le Monde* and the *Corriere Della Sera* present significant variations depending on the period selected for the Press Review

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

NUMBER OF ARTICLES PER MONTH ON THE AVIATION SECTOR IN THE PRESS REVIEW DURING 2003, BY NEWSPAPER

	01 03	02 03	03 03	04 03	05 03	06 03	07 03	08 03	09 03	10 03	Total 2003	07 02	08 02	09 02	Total 3Quarter 2002	TOTAL 2002 -2003	Mthly Ave.
<i>Corriere Della Sera</i>	33	40	38	30	24	47	33	16	24	41	326	49	27	36	112	438	33
<i>Financial Times</i>	20	13	23	24	9	7	11	5	16	8	136	35	26	27	88	224	17
<i>L'Echo</i>	6	15	29	24	15	19	19	19	17	15	178	7	7	22	36	214	16
<i>Times</i>	13	12	16	15	6	10	14	4	6	4	100	2	0	0	2	102	8
<i>Le Soir</i>	12	8	12	3	8	4	6	1	3	9	66	17	6	11	34	100	8
<i>Le Monde</i>	5	8	7	5	3	7	4	3	6	5	53	11	5	11	27	80	6
<i>Wall Street Journal Europe</i>	3	2	5	2	0	4	4	3	5	2	30	13	12	11	36	66	5

3. Thematic analysis

RATHER CONTRASTING COVERAGE...

- The themes tackled indicate that areas of interest vary from one newspaper to the next
 - Economic aspects (Financial Times, WSJE, The Times), Nuisances (Le Soir, Le Monde), Infrastructure and Safety (Le Soir, Corriere Della Sera)
 - Very variable coverage of international issues (Financial Times, WSJE, Le Monde more aware of the European and American situation/Corriere Della Sera, The Times, l'Echo, Le Soir more focused on the situation in each country)

... IN WHICH ATC IS, OVERALL, SCARCELY MENTIONED

- Accidents have a huge impact
 - Twice as much coverage of safety-related themes in 2002 (Lake Constance) as in 2003
- Strikes and related delays
 - Strikes by air traffic controllers, however, are not distinguished from other strikes in this sector (by pilots, flight personnel, maintenance staff, safety staff, etc.)
- The status of providers
 - Basically NATS in the British press

Erreur ! Des objets ne peuvent pas être créés à partir des codes de champs de mise en forme.

THEMES WHERE ATC IS NEVER AN ACTOR

	<i>Le Monde</i>	<i>Corriere Della Sera</i>	<i>Financial Times</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>WSJE</i>	<i>Le Soir</i>	<i>All</i>
Economic aspects of the sector	31%	19%	46%	39%	43%	22%	34%
International situation <i>(War, 9/11, SARS)</i>	7%	12%	11%	11%	14%	4%	10%
Security	5%	8%	4.5%	4.5%	5.5%	1%	5%
Technology	3.5%	3%	5%	1.5%	2%	2%	2.5%

THEMES WHERE ATC IS SOMETIMES AN ACTOR

	<i>Le Monde</i>	<i>Corriere Della Sera</i>	<i>Financial Times</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>WSJE</i>	<i>Le Soir</i>	<i>All</i>
Nuisance <i>(noise, strikes, delays, etc.)</i>	22.5%	18%	6%	17%	6.5%	30%	15.5%
Organisation <i>(airports, ATM)</i>	16.5%	20%	13.5%	9%	10%	20%	15%
Safety <i>(accidents, events, rules)</i>	12%	16%	4.5%	8%	8%	20%	12%
Regulation <i>(national, Single European Sky)</i>	2.5%	4%	9.5%	5.5%	11%	1%	6%

3.1 ECONOMIC THEMES

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE AVIATION SECTOR

- 8% of the themes mentioned overall in the seven newspapers relate to “General economic issues in the sector: traffic, number of passengers, etc.”
- 16% of themes relate to “Commercial and business activities in the sector: companies, market shares, opening and closure of new routes, profits and losses, profitability, tariff policy, marketing, etc.”
- 10% of themes relate to “Commercial organisation: partnerships and alliances, mergers, restructuring, bankruptcies and redundancies, launches, etc.”

A SIZEABLE SECTOR IN ECONOMIC TERMS

- Accounts for 34% of themes tackled in articles during the period under consideration
- The reason for such heavy coverage (apart from the fact that the FT and the WSJE specialise in economic issues) seems to lie above all in subjacent concerns about employment and the sovereignty of national flag-carriers

MEDIA BY MEDIA :

Financial Times

More than half of the 46% of economic themes relate to commercial activities (all companies)

WSJE

More than half of the 43% of economic themes relate to commercial activities (all companies)

The Times

Just under half of the 39% of economic themes relate to commercial activities (especially British Airways and low-cost operators)

Le Monde

More than half of the 31% of economic themes relate to commercial organisation (especially Air France)

Le Soir

Exactly half of the 22% of economic themes relate to commercial activities (especially low-cost operators)

Corriere Della Sera

Half of the 19% of economic themes relate to commercial organisation (especially Alitalia)

3.2 INTERNATIONAL & SECURITY-RELATED THEMES

THEMES LINKED TO THE EFFECTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

- War (Iraq, international tensions, etc.)
- Terrorism, 9/11
- SARS

SECURITY-RELATED THEMES

- Screening of passengers, baggage or equipment; bomb scares, etc.

These two themes, often linked in articles, reflect the unsurprising sensitivity of the aviation sector to international developments

- They account between them for 15% of themes in articles written during the period in question (10% for world events, 5% for security)
 - These figures are averages; the war in Iraq and SARS do not feature until 2003
 - Themes linked to the international situation are often also linked to economic themes; security themes are of course also linked to the organisation of networks (especially security measures in national airports)

3.3 TECHNOLOGICAL THEMES

TECHNOLOGICAL THEMES REPRESENT BARELY 2.5% OF THEMES OVERALL

- Space, satellites (e.g. *Galileo*),
- Technological innovations (aircraft, systems, tools, etc.)
- Concorde (*retirement of*)

AN UNDER-REPRESENTED AREA

- Technological success in the sector, involving current or future operations, performance and security, seems to be given little prominence
 - It is as if progress in the sector was taken for granted: a comparison with coverage of progress made in other transport sectors (especially rail and road innovations) would in all probability reveal a breathtaking lack of aviation coverage
 - The *Financial Times* alone devotes a substantial amount of space to new technological developments in the sector: 5% of themes – is this simply to guide its readers in their future investments?
 - For the other newspapers, this theme is first and foremost an excuse to talk at length about underlying Euro-American competition (*Airbus/Boeing, GPS/Galileo*)

3.4 NUISANCE THEMES

- 3.5% of themes brought up by the seven newspapers as a whole relate to problems caused by air traffic per se (noise, night flights, environmental pollution, etc.)
- 12% of themes relate to strikes, social unrest and the delays caused thereby (traffic fluidity and delays, diversions, cancellations, etc.)

A PREDOMINANTLY SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

- This accounts on average for 15.5% of the themes in articles during the period in question, with a tendency for coverage to vary greatly
 - The figure varies from 6% of themes to 30%, depending on the newspaper
 - Overwhelming focus on strikes and delays in 5 newspapers out of 7 – apart from the Belgian press which concentrates on the issue of night flights over Brussels
 - A general tendency to dwell on the effects of strikes rather than explain their causes, with coverage varying from one newspaper to another (stress on stranded passengers in the FT, WSJE and CS, in contrast to the greater neutrality of Le Monde and The Times)
 - Strikes involving air traffic controllers do not receive separate coverage and tend to be lumped together with the rest

MEDIA BY MEDIA

Le Soir

Of the 30% of themes relating to the problems caused by air traffic, 8 out of 10 relate to the political crisis arising from night flights over Brussels (see below)

Le Monde

Of the 22.5% of themes relating to the problems caused by air traffic, more than 7 out of 10 relate to strikes and delays in France (though also elsewhere in Europe and in the United States)

Corriere Della Sera

Of the 18% of themes relating to the problems caused by air traffic, 9 out of 10 relate to strikes and delays occurring in the airports of Milan

The Times

Of the 17% of themes relating to the problems caused by air traffic, 9 out of 10 relate to strikes and delays occurring in British airports

Financial Times & WSJE

Of the 6% of themes relating to the problems caused by air traffic in these two newspapers, 9 out of 10 relate to strikes and delays in European airspace, focusing on the reactions of dissatisfied passengers

3.5 ORGANISATIONAL THEMES

15% OF ALL THEMES RELATE TO THE “ORGANISATION OF NETWORKS”

- 6.5% of themes relate to the “organisation of networks and infrastructure (air corridors, slots, flows, new airport infrastructure, etc.)”
- 4.5% of themes are linked to the “management of networks and infrastructure (bodies responsible, management and organisation, HR, trade unions, public/private, etc.)”
- 1.5% of themes concern “ATM charges (cost of infrastructure, route charges, etc.)”
- 2.5% of themes directly concern “ATC (general operations, explanations of professions within air traffic control, centres, sectors, etc.)”

STEADY INTEREST IN AIRPORTS

- The newspapers are constantly open to any stories involving national airports (organisation and disorganisation, expansion and new construction)
- The rise of the low-cost airlines has awoken considerable interest in the regional airports they use

MEDIA BY MEDIA :

Corriere Della Sera

Of the 20% of organisational themes, more than 3/4 relate to the organisation and management of Milan’s airports and, to a lesser extent, those elsewhere in Italy

Le Soir

Of the 20% of organisational themes, 6 out of 10 relate to the organisation and management of airports serving Brussels (in conjunction with the night flights controversy)

Le Monde

Of the 16.5% of organisational themes, 8 out of 10 relate to the organisation of French airports (third airport for Paris, organisation of air corridors over Ile-de-France, expansion at Toulouse Blagnac)

Financial Times, The Times & WSJE

Organisational themes in these three newspapers account for little more than 10% of the total and focus for the most part on the organisation and management of London’s various airports

3.6 SAFETY-RELATED THEMES

SAFETY-RELATED THEMES ACCOUNT FOR 12% OF ALL THEMES

- 4% of themes relate to “major accidents”
- 1.5% of themes concern “minor accidents”
- 2.5% of themes concern “incidents (crossings, TCAS, radar, aircraft failures and faults, etc.)”
- 4% of themes concern “air safety rules (requirements for safe systems)”

PROMINENCE OF ACCIDENTS

- Coverage of these themes varies considerably according to the period in question
 - While the average is 8% in 2003, these themes account for almost 17% of the total in the third quarter of 2002 (Lake Constance accident)
 - On the other hand, interest in accidents is very short-lived when they occur in foreign airspace and/or do not involve home nationals: coverage of such accidents rarely lasts more than a week

MEDIA BY MEDIA :

Corriere Della Sera

Of the 16% of themes relating to safety, 8 out of 10 deal with the aftermath of the Linate accident in 2001 (subsequent legal proceedings) and with approach incidents at Milan’s two airports - all of them question whether the rules are being respected

Le Soir

Of the 20% of themes relating to safety, more than half relate to air disasters worldwide

Le Monde

Of the 12% of themes relating to safety, most relate to air disasters worldwide

The Times & Wall Street Journal Europe

Of the 8% of themes relating to safety, most relate to air disasters worldwide – the Times taking a particular interest in incidents in British airspace (such as Airproxes)

Financial Times

Of the 4.5 % of themes relating to safety, most relate to air disasters worldwide

3.7 REGULATORY THEMES

“GENERAL REGULATORY THEMES” ACCOUNT FOR 6% OF THE TOTAL

- “Organisation of competition, treaties, policy at national and European level, state intervention, legality of arrangements, etc.”
 - This category includes: EU-US negotiations on North Atlantic airspace, European Commission initiatives such as the Single European Sky, conflicts and disputes over state or regional subsidies (manufacturers, airlines, low-cost carriers), etc.

INTEREST VARIES DEPENDING ON THE NEWSPAPER’S POLITICAL SLANT

- The amount of articles touching on these themes varies from 1% to 11%
 - Le Soir (1%) and Le Monde (2.5%) are characterised by their extreme reticence in this regard, especially at European level
 - The Financial Times (9.5%) and the WSJE (11%) have a free-market approach to these themes: the aviation sector is suffering from its dependence on public money; their columns are regularly given over to leaders and editorials on this theme

4. Qualitative analyses

4.1 FIELD OF STUDY

CENTRED ON TWO PRINCIPAL THEMES

- The image of ATC
 - Coverage of the Lake Constance collision
 - verall portrayal of the world of ATC
- Problems relating to air transport
 - Coverage of environmental and noise-related themes

DRAWING ON MORE THAN 80 ARTICLES

- Selected from those collected by the EUROCONTROL Press Review (2003 version)
 - Drawn from the following newspapers: Le Monde, Corriere Della Sera, Financial Times, The Times, Wall Street Journal Europe, Le Soir
 - From the period 2002-2003 (with forays into 2000-2001 for some newspapers)
- The analytical methodology is that of structural linguistics
 - Identification of narrative structures, lexical fields, argumentative rhetoric and topics, etc.

4.2 IMAGES OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

GENERAL SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- On the Lake Constance accident, there are almost as many views as there are newspapers
 - Caution in attributing blame to air traffic control (The Times and Le Monde) v. critical questioning (Corriere and FT)
 - Questioning across the board, however, on the need for a European air traffic control system

- There are very few portrayals of air traffic control *per se*
 - The image of air traffic control usually emerges indirectly
 - Just as there is no European press, so there is no image of European air traffic control: economic/institutional questions (such as the Single European Sky) never feature on their own merits
 - The more concrete the coverage of the profession of controller, the more positive the image of air traffic control appears; the more abstract and/or dependent on judicial inquiries, the more negative it appears

Erreur ! Des objets ne peuvent pas être créés à partir des codes de champs de mise en forme.

4.3 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS : THE LAKE CONSTANCE ACCIDENT

COMPARATIVE RESULTS

HOW WAS THE LAKE CONSTANCE ACCIDENT COVERED?

	<i>Le Monde</i>	<i>Corriere Della Sera</i>	<i>Financial Times</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>WSJE</i>
Number of articles	2	3	3	1	2
Specialist correspondent	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Focus of coverage	ATC	ATC	Inquiry	Pilots	Aviation community
Tone	Cautious	Polemical	Critical	Didactic	Political
European context	This accident reopens the debate on harmonising the European sky	This accident highlights the crisis in the European air traffic control system	European efforts to minimise the fragmentation of airspace are being resisted by controllers on the Continent	No mention of the European debate	The need to enhance efficiency and safety calls for rationalisation of the European air traffic control system

WHAT IMAGE EMERGES OF THE LAKE CONSTANCE ACCIDENT?

	<i>Le Monde</i>	<i>Corriere Della Sera</i>	<i>Financial Times</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>WSJE</i>
Explanation for the accident	A tragic combination of circumstances Many systems unavailable	Deactivating the STCA caused the accident An illegal situation	The Swiss controller failed to avert the accident An astonishing error	A failure to think ahead led to tragedy because of the TCAS Many causes of accident	Contradictory messages from the controller and the TCAS caused the accident An odd accident by European standards
Resulting image of air traffic control	Controller presented as overworked No questioning of air traffic control	No portrayal of ATC A complex system which has failed and is unreliable	No portrayal Bizarre negligence on the part of professionals	Precise description of ATC operations An extremely rare human error	No portrayal No questioning of controller's actions

ANALYSIS BY MEDIA :

● **Le Monde (2 articles)**

Narration	Texts explicitly based on accounts of others (<i>German-language press, opinions of experts</i>) No specialist correspondent Focus on air traffic control and controllers
Tone	Caution and descriptive distancing (<i>use of conditional</i>)
Line of argument	A tragic combination of circumstances Despite the best efforts of all concerned, the unavailability of many elements of the ATC system made it impossible to avert the accident in time (<i>narrative logic, simple past</i>)
European context	This accident reopens the debate on harmonising the European sky (<i>the concept of the patchwork</i>). A list of threats to safety follows: lack of control of the controllers, non-binding rules, inconsistent rules and coordination problems, language difficulties, a shortage of controllers and an outmoded organisational structure. The issue of reorganisation is brought up very cautiously in the article, with a reminder of the SNCTA's intransigence on this point. It is as if the factors mentioned here functioned by analogy with those (not mentioned by the newspaper) brought up at the inquiry on the accident: is the subliminal message that this disaster could happen elsewhere?
Resulting image of air traffic control	An overworked controller (<i>lexis of alertness</i>), some of whose colleagues were aware of the gravity of the situation (<i>lexis of effort</i>), an image of responsibility which is only implicitly tarnished, if at all

● **Corriere Della Sera (3 articles)**

Narration	Texts based on a combination of reportage (recovery of debris, funerals, controller's admissions) and editorial analysis Several journalists, at least one of whom was a specialist Focus on Skyguide's share of the blame (<i>lexis of misconduct and deception</i>)
Tone	Contrast between pathos of reportage and polemical, ironic accusations made in the analytical passages, calling Skyguide to account and dismantling the arguments it put forward in its defence. Little description overall, tone by turns assertive, critical and urgent
Line of argument	Deactivating the STCA caused the accident (<i>no account of the accident</i>) Skyguide's responsibility for causing the deaths must be established all the more quickly since its defence lawyers are trying to palm its errors off onto the Russian pilot, even though the situation was illegal (one man, message sent too late)
European context	This accident highlights the crisis in the European air traffic control system , which is worsening, despite EUROCONTROL's achievements, because of resistance to change in some countries (France, Portugal and Greece). A list of the causes of this resistance follows: division of military and civilian responsibilities, harmonising sectors, standardising rules, training and funds, privatising providers Such a revolution is vital (safety, delays, costs), but harder to bring about than monetary union
Resulting image of air traffic control	No mention of the air traffic control environment or the profession of controller Each controller is part of a complex system which has failed and is unreliable (to the point of arousing suspicions about wilful destruction of evidence)

- **Financial Times (3 articles)**

Narration	Analysis based on contradictory statements by spokespersons and officials (<i>opposition figures</i>) One specialist correspondent and one expert in the field Focus on those involved in the inquiry
Tone	No direct narration; a desire for neutral journalism (<i>conditional frequently used</i>) to establish the facts by juxtaposing statements made by the actors, the resulting tone being implicitly critical of Swiss air traffic control, its astonishing negligence and contradictory statements
Line of argument	The controller failed to prevent the accident (<i>lexis of failure</i>): the deactivation of a vital alert system and, to a lesser extent, the pilots' reactions to their TCAS warnings contributed to this failure This error is all the more astonishing given that the sky was otherwise empty and that deactivating the alert system required additional vigilance on the part of the controller (<i>lexis of astonishment</i>)
European context	Although EUROCONTROL is working towards steady improvements in safety and fluidity, the Commission's efforts to establish a single sky and reduce the fragmentation of European airspace have been greeted with concern and strikes by Continental controllers (especially in France, but also in Greece, Hungary, Italy and Portugal) over what they see as a NATS-style privatisation
Resulting image of ATC	No portrayal of the controller's environment or profession. Skyguide's lack of <i>sang-froid</i> Unaccountable negligence on the part of professionals

- **The Times (1 article)**

Narration	Explanatory, highly-structured account (testimonies of pilots, experts and officials, put in context rather than simply juxtaposed) One special correspondent and one expert on the transport sector Focus on the pilots
Tone	Apart from some dramatic effects (<i>narrative terms, second-by-second basis, focus on the pilots</i>), the tone is highly didactic (<i>copious technical detail, principle of multiple causes, exhaustive list of contributing factors</i>), the aim being to apportion blame without sensationalism (<i>maintaining a distance from the controversies arising during the inquiry</i>)
Line of argument	The Swiss controller's lack of foresight becomes disastrous as a result of the subsequent evasive action ordered by the TCAS. Controller and pilots alike are presented as competent, experienced professionals. These in-flight collisions are extremely rare and always have multiple causes
European context	The debate is not broadened to the political sphere , but a list of possible contributing factors is provided: frequent near-misses in this sector, according to German protest groups; historical background to the TCAS and associated risks, delays caused by changing frequency, according to pilots; effects of the European patchwork, according to the Russians, etc. EUROCONTROL is presented as the ultimate guarantor of all information provided (initial flight plans, fitting out the Tupolev, influence of RVSM)
Resulting image of air traffic control	Concrete description of how systems work (actions in control room, cockpit) An extremely rare human error, deserving of compassion, unleashes a fatal chain of events

- Wall Street Journal Europe (2 articles)

Narration	Analysis is not descriptive but highly factual (with partisan accounts by officials) No specialist correspondent Focus on the Tupolev cockpit and the reactions of the aviation community
Tone	Very general and categorical views, making little effort to explain how the accident and related controversies unfolded and instead launching straight into the political debate (" <i>Would unified network of control have prevented deadly midair collision?</i> "), with the further intention of underlining the unusual nature of the accident (<i>lexes of improbability and incredulity, "disbelief", "outrageous"</i>)
Line of argument	Contradictory messages from the controller and the TCAS caused the accident: despite claims by Russian officials, the pilot, who was ultimately responsible for his actions, should have informed the controller and chosen to follow the instructions given by his TCAS, as western pilots are trained to do
European context	"This crash has raised the decibel level of arguments about the efficiency and safety of Europe's patchwork of national and regional air-traffic control" Recent strikes by controllers in certain countries against "needless" changes are an obstacle to the rationalisation of control sectors and redeployment of control teams at European level, required in the interests of both efficiency and safety
Resulting image of air traffic control	An elliptical representation (a lone reference to "a Swiss controller") with no concrete information on the air traffic control environment or the controller's profession and skills No suggestion of culpability of or misconduct by air traffic control This accident was more than unlikely in a developed region

4.4 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS : PORTRAYALS OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

WHAT IMAGES EMERGE OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL?

	<i>Le Monde</i>	<i>Corriere Della Sera</i>	<i>Financial Times</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>WSJE</i>
Number of articles	3 (2002-03)	20 (2002-03)	11 (2000-03)	6 (2000-03)	0
Specialist corresp.	No	Several	Yes	Yes	Yes
Angles	Strikes	Linate accident (2001) All incidents at Milan's airports Strikes	NATS Establishment of Swanwick	NATS UK safety	?
Resulting image of air traffic control	No meaningful portrayal of the profession or the changes within it	General impression of an incompetent, negligent profession, incapable of recognising its own failings	A fairly concrete portrayal of the environment, creating an impression of competence	Very precise description of the profession, environment and developments, creating an impression of safety	No mention of air traffic control

WHAT IS THE EDITORIAL LINE?

	<i>Le Monde</i>	<i>Corriere Della Sera</i>	<i>Financial Times</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>WSJE</i>
Editorial line	Reassuring messages about risks; playing down of conflicts	Unremitting condemnation of illegal situations: a spate of "tragedies foretold" coming before the courts	NATS as pioneer of a new-look European air traffic control	A watchful eye on safety, along with educational aims and a desire to avoid sensationalism	Opening-up of aviation markets and retreat from national thinking
Conclusion	Air traffic control is not an entirely separate issue No mention of European initiatives	An issue throughout Confidence in ATC authorities shattered European initiatives welcome	NATS' cash flow is the central issue	British air traffic control is a clearly-defined issue Scant information on European debates	Air traffic control is not an issue

ANALYSIS BY MEDIA :

- **Le Monde** (3 articles relating to air traffic control between 2002 and 2003)

Narration	No specialist correspondent for this sector
Angles	Depending on the event: crashes or strikes
Editorial line	Crashes: reassuring message (exceptionally high level of safety means that the emotionally-charged image propagated by the media frenzy surrounding accidents bears no relation to the actual risk) Strikes: effects minimised , emphasis on national rather than sector-specific demands
Image of air traffic control	Not portrayed in any meaningful way ("aiguilleurs du ciel") Implicitly susceptible to influence of national trade unions
Conclusions	Air traffic control is not apprehended as an entirely separate issue This tends to change only when there are serious accidents (attempts to apportion blame) or prolonged major strikes in the sector Silence or cautious wait-and-see policy on European initiatives

- **Corriere Della Sera** (20 articles relating to ATC between 2002 and 2003)

Narration	Spate of articles (reportage, analysis, interviews, reports, etc.) produced by over a dozen journalists, at least one of whom is a specialist in the field
Angles	The traumatic accident at Linate and its legal consequences; all near misses at Malpensa, Linate, etc., and all problems involving ATM infrastructure, organisation and management; strikes and problems with the continuity of the public service provided (in particular delays)
Editorial line	Unremitting condemnation of an illegal situation (<i>fuori legge</i>) in which the entire organisation was guilty of negligence, infringements of the rules, etc., and, above all, of bureaucratic cowardice and carelessness. The accident is branded a tragedy foretold , and memories of it are regularly stirred up through deliberately sensationalised references to other incidents and failures
Image of air traffic control	Image of a negligent, inadequate and incompetent profession (83 Airproxes in one year, strike by 7 controllers brings airport to a standstill, chronic absenteeism, etc.), incapable of recognising its own shortcomings (the newspaper systematically contrasts reassuring press releases with passenger anxiety and rage) Few portrayals, however, on the work actually carried out by controllers
Conclusions	Italy's shame: the focus on legal aspects and/or the victims' point of view, together with the constant politicisation of the debate, indicate that European initiatives are a natural and desirable solution Emotive presentation of the facts, dominated by a logic of fear, highlighting a lack of trust between the actors?

- **Financial Times** (11 articles relating to air traffic control between 2000 and 2003)

Narration	One specialist correspondent covering the current state of NATS
Angles	Particular focus on the privatisation of NATS and its funding problems ; the establishment of the Swanwick centre; the turmoil within NATS
Editorial line	The biggest, the best-looking ... and the most efficient in future? Despite budgetary difficulties and operational teething problems (computer failures, Swanwick's ballooning costs, delays, workload), the overriding image is of an innovative air traffic control system investing in technology for the future (new systems, datalinks, technology developed in conjunction with Germany and Spain) and given a new lease of life by private-sector management practices (compensation for delays, transparency over failures, bonuses for good results, staff benefit packages, ambitious recruitment policy) on the basis of the three pillars of "efficiency, safety and capacity"
Image of air traffic control	Establishing Swanwick allows for a concrete view of the environment (mysterious beauty of the interface between man and machine, magical power of the human voice) and a didactic view of the profession (approach/en-route, training issues, links between workload and stress), propagating an overall image of competence The best air traffic control service is one passengers never hear about
Conclusions	This gamble on the future has not yet paid off: NATS will pioneer a new-look European air traffic control system as long as its cash flow is secure – and despite pessimistic premonitions of a <i>"Railtrack of the Skies"</i>

- **The Times** (6 articles relating to air traffic control between 2000 and 2003)

Narration	Two specialist journalists, one of whom is the transport correspondent
Angles	The privatisation of NATS and its funding; safety (impact of privatisation, operations at West Drayton, overloading of controllers with work, RVSM, near-misses)
Editorial line	Over and above the arguments for and against privatisation (in the letters column and elsewhere), a watchful eye is kept on developments affecting the safety of ATM, with a cross-section of views from management, experts and unions - and pedagogical aims in describing the organisation and operations of British air traffic control Desire not to sensationalise incidents (near-misses and delays) by giving the greatest possible amount of technical information and statistics
Image of air traffic control	A profession where concentration (<i>lexes of vigilance and meticulousness</i>) meets tension (<i>lexes of stress and pressure</i>) A semi-futuristic, semi-militarised universe (<i>Dr Strangelove</i> meets Churchillian war-room), giving an impression of serene competence within an organisation which is operating smoothly and aware of what is at stake in terms of security Precise description of work at the flight inspection console (<i>lexis of complexity</i>) and operations by control teams
Conclusions	Confidence in the current high level of safety , which should not be eroded by the new status of NATS The issue of British air traffic control has been identified by the newspaper and is covered from time to time, with no desire to court controversy and no sensationalism Little information on European-level initiatives and debates

- **Wall Street Journal Europe** (no articles specifically on air traffic control)

Narration	One aviation correspondent Much analysis/opinion on the sector
Angles	Attempts to deregulate air transport and resistance thereto (particularly strikes and related delays)
Editorial line	The need to open up aviation markets and abandon facilities linked to public money and national flag-carriers
Image of air traffic control	Air traffic control never features <i>per se</i> : it is one of a range of Euro-Atlantic air transport problems
Conclusions	Air traffic control is not an issue

4.5 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS : NUISANCE

GENERAL SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- Sound pollution is mentioned by all the newspapers except the *WSJE*
 - Workings of current or planned national airport infrastructures
 - The debate becomes all the more keenly politicised when the state is struggling to come up with a strategy (*Le Soir, Corriere Della Sera*)
- The two British newspapers are markedly different from the others
 - They are the only ones to tackle environmental pollution (climate, air quality, landscape, etc.)
 - They are the only ones to suggest solutions for the future and present the conflict as anything other than irresolvable
 - They are the only ones to mention the European dimension of the problem (through judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, inter alia)

Erreur ! Des objets ne peuvent pas être créés à partir des codes de champs de mise en forme.

COMPARATIVE RESULTS

HOW ARE NUISANCES COVERED BY?

	<i>Le Monde</i>	<i>Corriere Della Sera</i>	<i>Financial Times</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>Le Soir</i>
Number of articles	5 (2002-03)	3 (2002-03)	5 (2002-03)	4 (2003)	13 (2002-03)
Specialist corresp.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Angle	Noise - Airports	Noise - Airports	Noise - Airports - European Court - Solutions Environment	Noise - Airports - European Court - Solutions Environment	Noise - Airports (night flights) - Politicisation
Focus	National	Regional	National and European	National and European	National

WHAT IMAGE EMERGES OF NUISANCES?

	<i>Le Monde</i>	<i>Corriere Della Sera</i>	<i>Financial Times</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>Le Soir</i>
Tone	Educational neutrality	Ironic distance	Sympathetic to econ. interests	Sympathy for victims	Critical description
Editorial line	Irresolvable conflicts between two schools of thought Growing protests by the victims	Parochial squabbles	In favour of the government's approach, but advocating a long-term view in the interests of the environment	Critical of the <i>predict and provide</i> approach, but sceptical about regulating supply	A political crisis masking the technical reality (and the victims)
Conclusion	A social phenomenon	Little interest	An appeal for European-level regulation of transport supply	An ongoing environmental debate in the UK	This issue has been appropriated by Belgian federal politics

ANALYSIS BY MEDIA

- **Le Monde** (5 articles relating nuisances between 2002 and 2003)

Narration	Analysis of problems of parties involved (administration, experts, elected representatives, associations) and monitoring of events (working papers, protests) National focus: one journalist monitors events in the regional affairs section
Tone	Concern for neutrality and education (<i>lexis of problems/consequences</i>), but tone is pessimistic (few solutions suggested, comprehensive coverage of protests)
Angles	Effects of new airport infrastructure (expansion/creation, corridors) on noise pollution; protests by local residents and their elected representatives; noise as a social phenomenon
Editorial line	Reasoned presentation of different schools of thought: irresolvable conflict between strategic thinking of authorities (order of importance = safety, capacity, problems caused by air traffic) and local thinking of residents' associations and elected representatives ; the authorities' efforts, underlined by the newspaper (examples of assessments of noise, transparency) and the rare attempts made to find a solution (sound insulation in homes, efforts by motorists, fining airlines) cannot contain growing discontent (<i>shifts in lexis: inconvenience > suffering, protests > anger</i>)
Conclusions	The issue is clear to this newspaper (" <i>Noise, noise and more noise</i> "): gloomy predictions (improved capacity brings with it increased traffic and noise), debates on transparency (noise as measured v. perception of noise), number of people affected, focus on suffering of "victims" (a "social phenomenon", the " <i>noisy aircraft</i> "), politicisation of the debate (responsibilities of elected representatives, visibility of residents' associations, the NIMBY [Not in my Back Yard] phenomenon), etc. Nothing to date on environmental pollution

- **Corriere Della Sera** (3 articles relating to nuisances between 2002 and 2003)

Narration	Detailed reports on certain events , no general analysis Focus on Milan : one journalist covering Malpensa, another Linate
Tone	Distance established from these "parochial squabbles" by means of a highly ironic tone ; the newspaper adopts no stance other than to appeal for ministerial intervention to resolve matters
Angles	Reallocation of flights to different routes (Linate); short-term increase in noise at Malpensa due to temporary closure of Linate
Editorial line	On the grounds that discussions are stalled in the committee responsible for reviewing Linate's air corridors, an account is given of the gung-ho statements by various local politicians exercised by their constituents' right to peace and quiet No dramatisation of noise pollution (<i>lexis of complaint</i>) Numerous details of routes, the communities overflowed and altitudes, but nothing on noise requirements and prevention measures, possible technical solutions or the positions and efforts of the authorities on this issue
Conclusions	Oversimplification of the issue , which appears to have had its day (note the references to the "violent" protests of 1995-1996 and subsequent legal proceedings) and been relegated now to the "News in Brief" column The issue of " <i>noise pollution</i> " receives very little coverage compared to questions of safety and of delays at Milan's two airports Nothing on environmental pollution

- **Financial Times** (5 articles relating to nuisances between 2002 and 2003)

Narration	Analysis of debates and decisions on the problems of noise pollution caused by developments in air traffic in Great Britain and throughout Europe Overview by aerospace correspondent (Kevin Done)
Tone	Balanced presentation of the various lines of argument on the matter, showing a keen sensitivity to economic interests (government, aviation experts)
Angles	Prospect of new airport infrastructure (Heathrow, new runways in the UK and Europe) in response to the predicted increase in traffic; judgment of the European Court of Human Rights on noise pollution (<i>Case of Hatton and Others v. the United Kingdom</i>)
Editorial line	Though clearly in favour of the government's approach , both in principle (observing ecological human rights to the letter is meaningless) and in practice (environmental standards already high in the UK, importance of not allowing Heathrow to be sidelined in the competition between European hubs), the newspaper nonetheless takes note of noise pollution (victim status acknowledged with minor dramatic effects: <i>lexes of sleep deprivation and stress</i>) and of air transport's impact on global warming (presented as self-evident); it advocates making better use of existing capacity through original measures designed to limit the demand for transport (taxes on fossil fuels, introduction of a contract system for allocating slots) No sense of the scale of the problem, no technical detail
Conclusions	A plea for supply to be regulated by means of a contract system , in the interests of a long-term, European-level perspective on the problem

- **The Times** (4 articles relating to nuisances in 2003)

Narration	Description of noise-related and environmental issues caused by the growth of air traffic in England (especially in the south-east) by the transport correspondent (Ben Webster) + accounts from readers (6 "open forum" columns)
Tone	Concern to present relevant arguments exhaustively, with a clear bias towards the plaintiffs in terms of quantity > largely critical view
Angles	Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights on noise pollution (" <i>Residents Lose Fight over Night Flights</i> ") ; proposal to tax fossil fuels ; debate among readers (" <i>Is the development of Gatwick the best solution to the growing air traffic problem?</i> ")
Editorial line	Insistence on problems related to air traffic growth (<i>lexis of "blight"</i>): noise and night flights affect one million people and constitute a catastrophic threat to the environment (global warming, air quality, survival of woodland, countryside, villages – dramatic <i>lexis</i> : <i>misery, self-destruction, sacrifice, vandalism</i>); they cause internecine strife and uncertainty-related stress for the residents involved and their elected representatives; this has brought about a questioning of traditional " <i>predict and provide</i> " approaches in the interests of regulating supply through increases in costs at certain airports (achieved by stopping hidden subsidies: fuel tax, VAT, duty free shops) - with a question mark over feasibility nevertheless: US acceptance?
Conclusions	The approach is critical as a matter of principle, giving the floor to victims and opponents ; the judgment of the European Court is not perceived to have ended the debate: planned consultations by the government will become the focus for a battle over matters of principle which has not yet been lost in the view of <i>The Times</i>

- **Le Soir** (13 articles relating to nuisances between 2002 and 2003)

Narration	Blanket coverage of a political crisis, presenting the various points of view (residents' associations, regional and national representatives, authorities, experts, pilots, etc.) National focus by a single correspondent (William Bourton)
Tone	Educational concern to provide clear technical details, with slightly ironic dramatisation of related political conflicts (<i>wordplay, lexis of war, political vocabulary interspersed with aviation lexis</i>)
Angles	Night flights over Brussels and related political crises
Editorial line	The newspaper follows the twists and turns of the political crisis step by step, giving the participants the floor to a very large degree. No overall stance is adopted on the general issue of problems caused by air traffic , but there is discreet condemnation of the excesses and squabbles of Belgian federal politics , which, the newspaper emphasises with relish, are out of step with the technical realities of the aviation world. The journalist's underlying intention is above all, it seems, to inform readers by providing as many technical details as possible (maps, statistics and figures, requirements and performance) so they can attempt to form their own opinions
Conclusions	This issue has been forced on the newspaper by the political dimension it has acquired. Despite the potential number of residents affected, there is, oddly, no focus on the victims' point of view . The issue has been appropriated by politics and none of the social, environmental or European aspects of the problem are given any prominence

5. Conclusions

FAR MORE NATIONAL COVERAGE THAN EUROPEAN COVERAGE

- These high-brow, quality newspapers barely report on problems linked to the reorganisation of air traffic control in Europe

THIS COVERAGE RARELY MENTIONS ATC AS A SEPARATE SUBJECT

- These newspapers seem to espouse the view of the user, for whom air traffic control appears as a minor cog in the air transport machine
 - Portrayals of the profession's technical and organisational realities are rare, probably because their supposed complexity is off-putting for the reader
 - Only accidents (or incidents) lead to any focus on air traffic control - it should also be noted that the more concrete and precise the newspaper's portrayal of the profession becomes, the less controllers are censured for their potential share of the blame
 - Strikes by controllers are not covered separately and are lumped together with all the other industrial disputes affecting air transport
 - Regular reports in the newspapers on problems caused by air traffic never call ATC to account

ARE THE NEWSPAPERS EXAMINED IN THIS STUDY ENOUGH TO PROVIDE A CLEAR VISION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL'S PUBLIC IMAGE?

- While it seems likely that studying other quality newspapers (in German or Spanish, for example) would confirm the trends observed here, a comprehensive study for the year 2004 on the basis of the new Press Review would permit more accurate findings
- There can be no doubt that sections of the "tabloid" press (daily and weekly popular and regional press) have a different view of ATC; analysing them is all the more desirable since they are probably more important in shaping public perceptions than the quality press
- A thematic study of the national press in countries involved in ATC-related accidents would undoubtedly open up new perspectives and comparisons between newspapers (Roissy, Linate and Constance since 2000)
- The field of audiovisual media (television news, reports and documentaries; fiction) remains to be explored
- EUROCONTROL would doubtless draw many lessons from a comparative study of successes in terms of popularising and publicising technical aspects of the profession