

Introduction:

Paris region perspective on Advanced Air Mobility : sustainable transportation and industrial development

Lionel GROTTO

CEO, Choose Paris Region

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Alain Cassier,
Dear Michel Wachenheim,
Dear Patrick Ky,
Dear Alain Garcia,

I feel humbled and honored to introduce this conference.

I see that this is a Toulouse – Paris event initiative and that we are in duplex with Toulouse.

And before going into the details of what I wanted to tell you, I would like to make a clarification. I am a Toulousain myself, and you should not ask me whether I'm a supporter of Stade toulousain or Stade français, that would be a tricky question!

More seriously, what I believe is that we will succeed thanks to cooperation.

What I can share is that on the topics we are talking about today, Paris has unrivalled assets in Europe, and even in the world. I'm not making this up; it's the companies in UAM with whom we are working who say so, be they European, but also from the US, or Chinese, or from Singapore. So, in this topic as in others, let's be united in the international competition we all have to face, but also in the context in which aviation is under pressure in the public opinion. And let's defend together our capital which can and should be seen as a driving force for the country and for Europe. Even by the Toulousains!

I am Lionel Grotto, I'm the head of Choose Paris Region. I'm here on behalf of my President Alexandra Dublanche, who is also Vice-President of the Region. So, in this context I will also speak to you on behalf of the Region.

I would like to share with you how we worked on UAM. Here are some words to describe what we did: cooperation and trust, vision and ambition, speed between the idea and the concrete project. I won't go into too many details because I saw in the program that Alban Negret from Group ADP will present the initiative later today, and what I have to say is no different from what he is about to tell you. This is for a very simple reason. This is not the vision of politicians on the one hand and the vision of the industry on the other. We really share the vision and work together. We listened to the companies, together, to adapt to their needs and convince them that Paris was the right place for UAM development.

We launched an international call for expression of interest in October 2020, jointly with Group ADP and RATP Group. We received 150 candidates from 25 countries. No more than one year later we had already brought together a diversity of partners which are as diverse as the people here in this conference, in the Pontoise airfield which is the place we have chosen to develop the sandbox. I would like to stress the importance of regulators in the work we did, namely DGAC and EASA, who I would like to thank for their support. Patrick Ky already mentioned how essential regulation is to fostering innovation, even if it is not often seen this way. I can't agree more. As a former dependent from the French telecoms regulator, I've been able to see this on other occasions. And today with Brexit, finance firms are telling us that the business-friendliness of the French regulator has been decisive in their choice to make Paris their largest hub in continental Europe.

What really struck me was the change we saw really quickly. At first, we would communicate on social media on this initiative, we would have this kind of answer, Paris oh really, but no it's London... But really fast Paris started to be recognized internationally for the fast development of UAM: in May 2021, an EASA study positioned Paris Region as one of the best European cities/regions to develop UAM activities.

What the e-VTOL companies told us, apart from the good discussion with the regulators, was that this initiative to put together such a large ecosystem was unique and very helpful. They also told us that the network of airfields that Group ADP owns and operates around Paris is quite unique in the world.

All this would not have been present absent business-friendly politicians, and I would really want to sincerely thank the President of the Region, Valérie Pécresse, who has long supported the aviation industry. We know that what's essential is not to support one initiative but to be present over time alongside the players in the ecosystem and this is what she has done. And today we are talking about the UAM but we are also working on drones, on electric aviation, on hydrogen in airports, etc. On the last one, we have developed the same type of call for expressions of interest,

but this time with ADP Group, Air France and Airbus. We are not talking about industries that are created overnight and we know that, we've been working hard for a number of years and will keep doing so in the future.

So now what's next, and it will be my conclusion.

First, the Olympic Games. What we hope is that it will be an opportunity to gain more trust from the public. Yes, the first prototypes will fly, , but the key is really how much we will improve public understanding of the technology and its impact. And maybe the younger generations will dream about aviation again.

We know the gap between testing prototypes and operating a fleet under industrial conditions. We know that it takes time and that the Olympic Games will be a milestone but not the end of the journey.

As often, technical issues are addressable. As engineers we sometimes tend to focus a bit too much on the WHAT. I think we also need to address the WHY. If all the actors work together and believe in something common, it will be the most powerful force in breaking down barriers.

Thank you.