

## An aero-space evening

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### Coming soon to an airport near you: the return of the propeller

[By Roger Helmer MEP](#)

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â€œ OnÂ Tuesday I attended an event organised by the aero-space group in the parliament, for a presentation on the EU's "CleanSky" project.Â This is a large-scale project to develop "cleaner" aviation, and the main thrust of the evening seemed to be an appeal for "CleanSky 2".Â Put in plain language, it seemed to be an appeal for further funding after the initial CleanSky programme runs out in 2016.Â Such is the way of bureaucracies and quangoes: they grow, they extend, they need more money.

We need to get this in perspective, of course.Â I yield to no one in my opposition to European supra-nationalism.Â But there is a strong case for international cooperation in research and development in this industry.Â The scale is such that it would be a huge challenge for any one country.

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Equally, I am hugely opposed to greenery and the Great Carbon Myth.Â Yet when you strip away the green fluff, what the CleanSky programme is trying to do is to make aircraft more economical by reducing fuel use.Â At the same time they're trying, with some success, to reduce the noise footprint of aircraft, and to cut emissions of genuinely nasty chemicals and particulates from aircraft exhaust.Â (Someone recalled the days when you could see black smoke coming out of aero engines).Â These are all desirable objectives.

Apparently a fruitful field of research is the "propfan engine", a sort of hybrid jet/prop engine with the propellers on the back.Â It promises lower fuel consumption and reduced noise, and looks like a Gorgon's head with snakes.

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These developments could have a big impact in the UK.Â For example Airbus Wings are made at Filton, Bristol, while Rolls Royce in Derby (in the East Midlands) is one of the world's great aero-engine companies (and their man was at our event in Brux).

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However there is nothing so promising that the European Commission cannot screw it up.Â I have [written previously](#) about the doubly misguided attempt to extend the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) not only to aviation, but to foreign airlines as well.Â This bid for extraterritoriality is widely regarded as illegal and a breach of the Warsaw Convention on international air transport.Â The Commission has achieved the remarkable feat of uniting the USA, the BRICs, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and South Africa (and other countries) in opposition to its move.

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The Chinese, who seem to be leading the charge, have already blocked AirBus orders worth many billions of â‚¬-uros.Â Unless this problem is resolved, and soon, it could have very damaging implications.Â This could cost British jobs.Â I talked to a senior AirBus executive who was quite clear that the Commission's position was illegal, that the threats were real, and that the position had to be resolved.

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On a personal note, I was reminded that my former staffer Georgie Browse is now working for Airbus, and by all accounts doing well.Â I'm always delighted to hear of the progress of former staffers, and quite a number seem to be doing great things.

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