

Message from the CEO

2023 marks a turning point for Schiphol. Our airport is once again a pleasant place, not only for travel but also for work, regardless of working for or at Schiphol. We intensified our steps towards striking a better balance for both neighbours and the environment too. It is important to give more consideration to the interests of others as only then we earn the support needed for us to continue performing our role.



Turning Point: quieter, cleaner, better

2023 has been the year of turnaround for Royal Schiphol Group on many fronts. Not only for travellers who once again could move swiftly from check-in to the gate thanks to sufficient security officers at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol but also for the thousands of employees who have experienced improved working conditions. We have also focused this year on our neighbours and the environment by intensifying our efforts to make Schiphol quieter, cleaner and better not only for today but for the years to come.

Improved working conditions

Achieving better working conditions, higher wages and improved work-to-rest ratio for security officers was non-negotiable in 2023 resulting in Schiphol becoming an attractive workplace for them. I am proud of the high number of security officers recruited in a short time frame and how that has been achieved. Key was the joint recruitment campaign, working side by side with our security companies. The success was for everyone to see and experience – the 2022 queues are no longer there, disappearing like frost in the sun. Occasionally, we find the waiting times for arriving travellers, at for example passport control, too long and we are working hard to find a structural solution together with the government. Overall though 2023 has been the year when travellers have once again experienced how nice it is to travel through Schiphol.

A better experience for travellers

There are many factors that contributed to this improved experience for travellers. Our Airport Operations Centre (APOC) is fully operational, significantly increasing predictability, flexibility and efficiency of our operations. All available data, from our partners at the airport, is processed by the APOC into specific points of attention and measures that allow us to work at

improving the passenger journey. We also gave travellers the opportunity to take partial control of their own journey by booking a time slot to go through security. This service has been used more than a million times since introduced and is much appreciated by travellers. Lastly, I'd like to mention how we brought management closer to the operation. We transformed the senior management team into a broader operationally composed Executive Team of six disciplines responsible for managing the company. As a result, the top of the organisation is much more focused on day-to-day operations at the airport. I am pleased that this management structure will continue.

A sense of responsibility

'It's up to us' is our internal motto and embodies our changed approach. We feel a sense of responsibility for matters and processes that are officially not our responsibility yet do take place at our premises. Our drive to improve the working conditions of the handling agents is an example. Together with the handling companies and airlines, improving the working conditions in baggage handling got off to a flying start in 2023. Many work locations are now equipped with properly functioning lifting aids and there are many more to come this year meaning that agents will no longer need to do heavy lifting. Our vision for the future is a fully automated baggage handling process. We are also hard at work on and around the apron, piloting innovations to reduce exposure to (ultra)fine particles. It won't be easy but we are devoted to offering colleagues working between aircraft every day a better work environment.

Prioritising our investments

Another important shift made in 2023 is the clear need to prioritise our investments in order to ensure the longer term quality of and at the airport. After years of focusing too much

on costs and growth, we decided in 2023 that we had catching up to do to offer a higher level of quality to colleagues, travellers and airlines, as we are first and foremost, a logistics company that must be able to rely on its assets. In the broader context in which Schiphol operates, we want more structural attention to be paid to the quality and reliability of our services.

A quieter, cleaner and better Schiphol

Besides the improvements made for travellers and employees, we also intensified our steps towards developing a better relationship with our neighbours and the environment. We introduced our 8-point plan containing specific measures and suggestions for a quieter, cleaner and better Schiphol, including implementing a night curfew, no longer welcoming private jets and keeping the noisiest planes away. We are in favour of a distance-based air travel tax; the further the flight, the higher the tax. Schiphol must be quieter, cleaner and better. Firstly, because we simply believe that this is necessary. Schiphol serves a societal interest which includes taking good care of the neighbours and the environment. We are very transparent on our position due to the broad public interest. Secondly, because Schiphol's value is too great to jeopardise the public support we have. Schiphol is a fantastic company. Schiphol connects the Netherlands with the rest of the world in a unique way. Every day, the Dutch people, Dutch companies and the Dutch economy benefit from the extensive network of destinations that has been established over more than one hundred years. That is something to be proud of and to cherish, Schiphol, and with it the entire Dutch aviation sector, needs support to continue performing that role. That support needs to be earned, which is only possible if we take the needs of others much more into consideration. This is also high on the political agenda and our proposals resonate with many parties.

Breaking with tradition

We have disturbed the equilibrium with our 8-point plan. Our new ideas and approach has broken with tradition, causing unpopularity with some. However, I am convinced that transparency and engaging in debate from a variety of perspectives only makes for a better balance. Operationally,

we worked very well with our partners at the airport in 2023, something I am proud of. We also see this reflected in the reputation scores among local residents and people in the Netherlands in general. These have risen systematically over the past year towards the level we are aiming for.

Work well together

A proof point of our 'working well together' was when the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management surprised us and suspended the experimental scheme meaning that we and our sector partners had to establish, in a very short space of time, what the number of flights for 2024 could be. This is however only one proof point in addition to those already mentioned demonstrating both our actions and commitment to work well together. Our thanks go to all our partners, from cleaners to Marechaussee officers, and from retailers to airlines. Together, we made Schiphol once again a pleasant airport for travellers and workers. The turning point enabling structural improvement at Schiphol has been made yet realistically we recognise that there's still a lot to be done and along the way we will undoubtedly discover that more is needed than we thought. What is certain though, is that we are on our way towards a quieter, cleaner and better future and that we have no intention of turning back. 2023 was truly a turning point of structural improvement for Schiphol.

Ruud Sondag
President & CEO of Royal Schiphol Group