

## Toronto Police (Cont.)

The T3 is a three-wheeled vehicle that travels up to 10 miles an hour, spokesman Scott Armstrong said. "This was a quick response in what has become a very large area that must be patrolled, and provides visibility, as officers on the vehicles are able to see over crowded areas," he said.

The airport bought two vehicles, one for each terminal, at \$13,000 each, Armstrong said. Editor's note: Go to the Towers and Tarmacs blog to see photos of the T3 vehicles. *-benet\_wilson@aviationweek.com*

## European Parliament Considers Extending Schengen To Nine Countries

The European Parliament has debated rules to expand the Schengen passport-free travel zone to nine more member states in time for the Christmas travel season.

The rules, if ratified, would grant citizens of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia the same passport-free travel rights as the other 15 Schengen countries. Currently, 13 EU member states are Schengen members: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. In addition, two non-EU states, Norway and Iceland, participate. The U.K. and Ireland coordinate on security and do not participate in the program.

Parliament proposed extending Schengen rights to the new entrants for land and sea borders in time for Christmas; air travel is to be included by March.

The proposed changes would affect airport design and visa authorization in that they would allow passengers to travel through the entire expanded Schengen area on a single visa. Airports in the new-entrant countries will have to allow for processing passengers and security to take into account travelers who don't require visas or passports for transferring flights, for example. In addition, all participating Schengen member states can issue visas for the entire area in third countries.

EU member state Cyprus is expected to join in 2009, while Romania and Bulgaria are not expected to join the program until 2011. *-madhu\_unnikrishnan@aviationweek.com*

## Security Issues Drops Heathrow To Bottom Of Airport Rankings

London Heathrow Airport was dead last in a new survey conducted by aviation consultant Ascend that

ranks the top 10 biggest airports.

Ascend surveyed more than 500 industry observers, half from outside the U.K., who placed Heathrow below European competitors Paris Charles de Gaulle, Amsterdam Schiphol and Frankfurt. The airport also ranked lower than other facilities, including London Gatwick, Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong, Los Angeles and JFK Airport.

The survey found that Heathrow's security processes and walking times were its biggest problems.

"Heathrow's reputation, not only amongst consumers but also in the industry, really is in tatters. For Heathrow to score so poorly against its peer group of international hub airports is simply embarrassing for BAA. It all comes down to customer experience, and the survey tells us Heathrow just doesn't deliver," said Peter Morris, Ascend's chief economist. "Other airports have dealt with similar issues more effectively, but for BAA the motivation to invest in improvements in some of its core problem areas is not clear. So the misery of long queues, long waiting times and long walks isn't going to get better any time soon."

There has been much media coverage about the failings of Heathrow, attention being paid to the additional security measures imposed and the ensuing delays for passengers, said Fiona Benharoosh, marketing and communications director for Ascend. "However, no one has yet sought the views of those from inside the commercial aviation industry, namely the managers and executives from aviation finance houses, airlines, insurance companies and suppliers to the industry who use Heathrow on a frequent basis," she said.

Good market research should not surprise, but provide more clarity about the range of views on a subject, Benharoosh said. "In this case, we were interested to know the strength of feeling in the industry about the much-publicized failings of Heathrow," she explained. "What seemed clear was that users all round the world expressed their criticism but still acknowledged the good elements. Our experience of 10-point scale ratings tells us that a score of four is very poor for a service rating of an airport. Ratings of eight are seen for good airports, six for average airports and four to five for poor airports."

"Overall we suspect that industry views may be harder than the general public, but BAA would need to confirm this," Benharoosh said.

Editor's note: go to the Towers and Tarmacs blog to see the full list of airports and their rankings, along with more survey results about Heathrow. *-benet\_wilson@aviationweek.com*