

Cargo must be “at the forefront” of Britain’s post-Brexit aviation policy

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Chief executive of CargoLogicAir David Kerr has called on the UK government to define its post-Brexit aviation policy and put the needs of cargo at the “forefront”.

Speaking at Farnborough International Airshow this week, Mr Kerr said it was “vital” for UK plc that the needs of cargo were ensured in the policy.

“We highlighted this with aviation minister Elizabeth Sugg in March, reiterating it this week when we met with under-secretary of state for transport Jesse Norman,” said Mr Kerr.

“Alongside industry colleagues at Airlines UK, we are participating in freight working groups with the Department for Transport (DfT) and supporting research on air cargo’s value.”

He added negotiations must “not simply” be about air service agreements and regulatory oversight, but also trade, borders and facilitating the UK’s place in the global economy.

This, he said, should not result in a situation where “expensive contingency plans” have to be created and maintained, “never mind activated”.

“We support the government’s aviation policy, but until the final outcome of the negotiations and ratification are complete, every company will keep all options on the table,” he said.

“Like everyone else, we want a swift resolution to negotiations, but we also need the right outcome, as we are making long-term commitments to UK markets and British businesses.”

Mr Kerr also called on the country’s airports to make a “greater commitment” in supporting cargo operations. To my dismay, he said, many airports still saw the freight side of their business as “low priority” and this needed to change.

“Airport expansion plans are top of the agenda and cargo needs a share of that voice; we hear about regional carriers getting their share of capacity- cargo needs that too.

“We need access to viable slots - and we will continue to challenge the flexibility around airport operating hours.”

Furthermore, he said, improvements in “proper” ground infrastructure for cargo operators at UK airports, including parking and handling, were required.

“The UK has the potential to become an even more outward-looking, globally trading economy,” Mr Kerr said. “Air cargo will be the engine of that success.”

(By Alexander Whiteman, The LoadStar)