



ERA director general Mike Ambrose being interviewed in Athens by award-winning airline CityJet's own television crew.

positives of European aviation. "Europe has become the driving force in the world in certain key areas of aviation, including safety and the environment." As is the case in the US, Calléja expressed a desire for "urgent progress" on aviation capacity in Europe.

Winning the environmental battle

On the second day of the meeting, Tom Christides, Blue1's vice president, corporate communications and government affairs, explained to delegates his airline's carbon offsetting programme. He observed that for an



Public relations expert Steve Dunne, director of The Brighter Group, warned the aviation industry not to underestimate environmental opponents.

airline carbon offsetting scheme to work, the process of participation must be made as easy as possible for the customer – "a one-click system". Christides acknowledged that issues do still remain in running a carbon offsetting scheme – "the payment process can be difficult". He also expressed concern that the media is confusing the public about the validity of carbon offsetting.

Public relations expert Steve Dunne, director of The Brighter Group, warned the aviation industry not to underestimate environmental opponents. He said: "Environmentally friendly aviation is perhaps the most significant issue faced by the aviation industry in two decades. The media is blaming aviation and perception is reality. There is a public relations machine lining up against this industry."

Networking and making deals

As ever, the networking opportunities at the General Assembly perfectly complemented the conference sessions. The bustling exhibition area, in particular, saw many delegates sitting down to discuss future deals and confirm new agreements.

Thoughts now turn to next year's General Assembly in Manchester (UK), a venue that is already convincing ERA members to mark their diaries for 8-10 October 2008. ■



ERA president Antonis Simigdalas (right) and Robert Jensen, president of Kenyon International Emergency Services (centre), present Daniel Calléja, the European Commission's director for air transport, with a copy of the new ERA Emergency Response Preparedness Standards.