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AVIATION TURKEY

PROF. DR. KEMAL YÜKSEK
DIRECTOR
GENERAL OF CIVIL
AVIATION

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“Türkiye Has
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Story in Civil
Aviation that
Amazes
the World ”

PEGASUS to
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Experience
of its
Guests and
Employees
with AI



Vision and
Collaboration
is the Key
to Making
Our Vibrant
Industry
Sustainable



nts



28

THY
Deepens
its Long-
Standing
Partnership
with Airbus
& Rolls-
Royce
Through
Historic
Aircraft
and Engine
Orders

38

"The A220-
300 is Now
Proven to
be a Very
Efficient
Aircraft"



34

Turkish
Airlines'
Historic
Order for
150 A321neo
and
80 A350
Family
Aircraft



47

AVIAREPS
will
Represent
Croatia
Airlines in
Turkey



48

Exclusive
Interview with
Qatar
Airways
Türkiye
General
Manager
Evren Ökmen

52

TAV
Technologies
Grows in
the South
American
Market



Global Passenger Demand Soars in March 2024: A Sign of Recovery and Resilience

Amidst the ever-evolving landscape of the aviation industry, the latest report from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) for March 2024 brings promising news of a significant uptick in global passenger demand.

Total demand for global passenger travel, as measured by revenue passenger kilometers (RPKs), soared by an impressive 13.8% compared to March 2023. This robust growth underscores the industry's remarkable resilience and its steady path towards recovery.

Accompanying the surge in demand, total capacity, measured in available seat kilometers witnessed a notable increase of 12.3% year-on-year. This expansion in capacity reflects airlines' efforts to meet the growing demand for air travel worldwide.

The March 2024 load factor reached an impressive 82.0%, marking a notable

improvement of 1.0 percentage point compared to March 2023. This indicates that airlines are effectively optimizing their available capacity, resulting in higher seat occupancy rates and improved efficiency.

International passenger demand witnessed a robust increase of 18.9% compared to March 2023. This growth was accompanied by a corresponding rise in capacity, with a year-on-year increase of 18.8%. The international load factor also improved, reaching 81.6%.

Domestic passenger demand registered a healthy growth rate of 6.6% compared to March 2023. Although slightly slower than international demand, domestic travel continues to show resilience and stability. The domestic load factor reached an impressive 82.6%, reflecting strong passenger confidence in air travel.

While the report brings encouraging news of growth and recovery, challenges persist, particularly regarding supply chain issues and operational efficiency. Willie Walsh, Director General of IATA, emphasized the urgent need for the industry to address these challenges proactively to ensure a hassle-

free travel experience for passengers.

Leading the way with a remarkable 38.5% year-on-year increase in demand, Asia-Pacific airlines continue to drive growth in the industry. Major routes from the region display outstanding growth, despite ongoing challenges.





European carriers saw a solid 11.6% year-on-year increase in demand, signaling a positive trajectory towards recovery. Although load factors remained relatively stable, capacity expansion reflects growing passenger confidence.

Noteworthy growth of 14.5% year-on-year in

demand was observed among North American carriers. Despite a slight decrease in load factor, the region continues to demonstrate resilience and momentum.

The March 2024 report from IATA provides a glimpse into the industry's ongoing recovery journey. With robust demand, increased capacity,

and improving load factors, the aviation sector is poised for a strong resurgence as it navigates the challenges and opportunities ahead. As the aviation industry enters the peak Northern Summer travel season, there is every indication that the strong demand for travel will continue.

Airlines must remain vigilant in their efforts to meet this demand while prioritizing customer care and operational excellence.

Enjoy the issue ... [🔗](#)

Ayşe Akalın
Editor in Chief

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Ayşe Akalın.





“Türkiye Has Created a Success Story in Civil Aviation that Amazes the World,”

The first aviation operations in our country were started in two hangars and at a small aerodrome, being the then facility, in Sefakoy near the current location of Ataturk Airport, in 1912. Turkish Civil Aviation was founded institutionally through the Turkish Aircraft Community, which was founded in 1925 in line with the quote by Ataturk “THE FUTURE IS IN THE SKIES” leading the future of the country, and which was, then, named as Turkish Aeronautical Association.

The first Civil Aviation Transportation was initiated by means of a small sized fleet covering 5 aircraft in 1933 under the name of “Turkish Air Mails”. “State Airlines Operation Authority”, which was founded within the organization of the Ministry of National Defense at the 10th anniversary of our Republic, were commissioned in order to establish civil airlines, and to carry out transportation in Turkey. “Civil Aviation Department”, which was founded within the organization of the Ministry of Transport in 1954 in order to protect our national interests and to carry out and supervise our international relations on regular basis upon the rapid development of World Civil Aviation and the significant progress in the technology, was reorganized as “Directorate General of Civil Aviation” in 1987 in accordance with the then current conditions. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation, the Main Service Division of the Ministry of Transport until November 18, 2005, achieved its autonomy financially through the Law Nr. 5431 on Organization and Duties of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, coming into effect on the mentioned date, and reached its current managerial structure.

Today, the aviation operations, performed in our country, are carried out in accordance with the Turkish Civil Aviation Act Nr.2920 and the Administrative and Technical Regulations issued accordingly and the Aviation Instructions.



Aviation Turkey approached Prof. Dr. Kemal Yüksek, Director General of Turkish Civil Aviation, to get first hand information on the current organizational structure of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), performance of Turkish Civil Aviation in 2023 and targets for 2024, Türkiye's position in civil aviation in the region and globally, and the "New Civil Aviation Model" developed by DGCA.

Aviation Turkey: Could you provide an overview of the current organizational structure and the number of personnel at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation?

Kemal Yüksek: Aviation activities in Türkiye are governed by the Turkish Civil Aviation Law No. 2920, along with administrative and technical regulations and aviation instructions issued under its authority. The

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) serves as the primary civil aviation authority, responsible for licensing, authorization, certification, and clearance processes within the aviation sector, as well as establishing regulations for airline transportation and overseeing compliance with these regulations.

DGCA gained financial autonomy in 2005 through Law No. 5431 on the Organization and Duties

of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Under the Presidential Government System established in 2018, it operates under Presidential Decree No. 4 dated 15/7/2018 and numbered 30479. The primary mission of the Directorate General is to oversee and regulate aviation activities in our country in alignment with international rules and standards while also setting strategies and policies for aviation development.

Aviation Turkey: How do you assess the performance of Turkish Civil Aviation in 2023, and what are the targets for 2024?

Kemal Yüksek: "As you may be aware, the European Organization for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL) regularly publishes air traffic statistics. Istanbul Airport consistently ranks among the busiest airports in Europe in both weekly and monthly reports. Furthermore, Sabiha Gökçen and Antalya Airports are also prominently in Europe's top 10 busiest airports.

In the 2023 annual statistics, Turkish Airlines emerges as a leader in European aviation. After Ryanair and EasyJet, Turkish Airlines carries the highest number of passengers in Europe. This places Turkish Airlines among the foremost scheduled airlines in Europe, surpassing flag carriers such as Lufthansa and Air France.

February 2024 | Top 20 Airports daily traffic



2023 has indeed marked a year of remarkable achievements for Turkish civil aviation. The sight of an airplane soaring over Türkiye's skies every 15 seconds is one of the clearest signs of the sector's growth. On average, both domestic and international passenger traffic saw a substantial 20 percent increase. Looking ahead to 2024, we anticipate AJET, licensed by the General Directorate of Civil Aviation, to take a larger share of the European airline market, further boosting our passenger numbers.

In civil aviation, we typically measure progress regarding passenger and aircraft traffic figures. However, 2023 stands out as a year of pride not only in airline transportation but also across various sectors, such as the UAV and ballooning activities, aircraft certification, and fostering a safety culture within the sector. In 2024, we anticipate this momentum to persist, driven by the initiatives and projects we've implemented across all facets of civil aviation, alongside our collaborative efforts with industry partners.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Could you provide information on the number of domestic and international passengers in Turkish Civil Aviation, the total workforce in the aviation sector, the

Airport ranking

Week 26 Feb - 03 Mar 2024

No.	Airport	Avg. daily dep/arr flights	% prev week	% prev year	% 2019
1.	iGA Istanbul	1,321	+1%	↑ +3%	n/a
2.	London Heathrow	1,283	+1%	↑ +6%	↑ +1%
3.	Amsterdam	1,266	-1%	↑ +14%	↓ -5%
4.	Paris Charles de Gaulle	1,169	-0%	↑ +1%	↓ -9%
5.	Frankfurt	1,131	+13%	↑ +7%	↓ -16%
6.	Madrid Barajas	1,093	+1%	↑ +7%	↓ -2%
7.	Barcelona	871	+5%	↑ +11%	↑ +1%
8.	Munich	813	+9%	↑ +10%	↓ -26%
9.	Rome Fiumicino	703	+2%	↑ +21%	↓ -10%
10.	Zurich	630	+2%	↑ +11%	↓ -9%



number of airplanes and helicopters in operation, and the number of aircraft maintained in 2023?

Kemal Yüksek: In 2023, passenger numbers surged by 18 percent compared to the previous year, reaching a total of 214 million. Domestic

passengers rose by 16 percent to 91 million, while international passengers saw a 19 percent increase, totaling 123 million. The

Airport ranking

Week 25-31 Mar 2024

No.	Airport	Avg. daily dep/arr flights	% prev week	% prev year	% 2019
1.	iGA Istanbul	1,328	+2%	↑ +5%	n/a
2.	London Heathrow	1,285	-1%	↑ +7%	↓ -1%
3.	Amsterdam	1,276	+1%	↑ +6%	↓ -4%
4.	Frankfurt	1,192	+1%	↑ +19%	↓ -13%
5.	Paris Charles de Gaulle	1,191	+0%	↑ +1%	↓ -9%
6.	Madrid Barajas	1,106	-1%	↑ +6%	↓ -1%
7.	Barcelona	898	+2%	↑ +4%	↑ +6%
8.	Munich	826	-1%	↑ +19%	↓ -26%
9.	Rome Fiumicino	782	+6%	↑ +18%	↑ +2%
10.	London Gatwick	659	+4%	↓ -0%	↓ -10%



INTERVIEW



number of airline operators expanded to 14, including AJET, with the overall count of aviation businesses reaching 232. By the end of 2023, the fleet of wide-body aircraft grew to 668, comprising 634 passenger aircraft (503 narrow-body and 131 wide-body), along with 34 cargo aircraft. The total number of aircraft registered under the Turkish registry stands at 1,856.

By the end of 2023, the aviation sector employed over 23,000 licensed personnel, including more than 14,000 pilots, 2,000

air traffic controllers, 463 flight operations specialists, over 4,600 technicians, 620 air traffic safety electronics personnel, and 609 aviation information management specialists. In total, the number of employees in the civil aviation sector has reached 262,000. Additionally, the revenue of our aviation sector has increased to USD 35.7 billion.

Aviation Turkey: Could you briefly outline the policies pursued by the DGCA for the development of the civil aviation sector?

Kemal Yüksek: Under Presidential Decree No. 4, the DGCA has been entrusted with numerous duties and responsibilities primarily aimed at meeting the needs and expectations of the sector. As such, the DGCA's primary mission is to formulate policies ensuring the regulation and advancement of civil aviation activities in our country in line with the public interest, economic and social developments, and national security objectives. In this context, our General Directorate's

civil aviation policy operates at four levels: institutional, sectoral, national, and global. As an institution, our core policy is to enhance sector services through a data-driven and automated structure, meeting the demands of the digital age. Within this framework, we have implemented the New Civil Aviation Approach and the Corporate Transformation Model. The second policy we pursue for the sector is to establish the world's largest flight network, guided by the goal of "Flying to Every Destination Worldwide." In pursuit of this objective, we are implementing an aviation policy encompassing various sub-components, such as agreements that strategically position our country, expanding our flight routes and fleet, employing a skilled workforce, and investing in airport infrastructure.

The third pillar of our civil aviation policy is to achieve the national goals outlined in high-level policy documents and state master plans. Additionally, our global aviation policy aims to ensure that our aviation sector adheres to international aviation standards at the highest level, establishing our country as a respected leader in the field. To this end, we are pursuing a policy focused on increasing air traffic while enhancing our safety and security standards to the highest



levels. Our goal is to become the most significant actor in the global aviation system by meeting standards and continuously improving and developing them. Accordingly, we are actively working to play a prominent role in the decision-making processes of international civil aviation organizations and to influence global aviation policies.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: What can you tell us about Türkiye's position in civil aviation in the region and globally, given its significant advancements in aviation over the past 20 years?

Kemal Yüksek: As you may know, thanks to the steps taken in 2003 to liberalize Turkish civil aviation under the leadership of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, Turkey has achieved a significant position in global aviation today. The success of this policy is evident in the remarkable increase in the number of passengers on domestic and international flights, which has risen from 34.5 million in 2002 to over 214 million in 2023. This achievement aligns with our goal of ensuring that "Every citizen will fly at least once in their lifetime."

The endeavor to ensure the sustainability of progress in civil aviation is as crucial as these advancements. Our country has emerged as a leader in airline transportation through a strategic



approach encompassing the expansion of domestic destinations, the integration of new international routes, and the optimal utilization of our geographical advantages.

Our flights to 60 destinations across 50 countries in 2002 expanded to 346 destinations spanning 130 countries. Additionally, our flight network extends to 173 countries. In essence, this signifies that Türkiye, beyond its direct access, has civil aviation

cooperation agreements with 43 more countries. This expansion demonstrates our country's significant growth in global flight networks and cooperation in airline transportation, surpassing its current potential. As the DGCA, we are laying the groundwork for sustainable growth, considering not only our sector's current capabilities but also its future potential. This approach is vital in showcasing the impact of Türkiye's strides in civil aviation and the gradual

realization of our goal to become a global leader in aviation.

One of the most strategic steps toward this goal was the opening of Istanbul Airport. Since its inauguration, Istanbul Airport has continuously set new records, swiftly rising to become the world's third-busiest airport in terms of airline flights, with 102 airlines operating as of 2024. In a remarkably short span of time, we have made significant strides in our objective to position İGA as



INTERVIEW

the airport with the highest number of airlines globally. As a result, our country has emerged as one of the world's foremost global transit hubs in the aviation industry.

Furthermore, with the commencement of Turkish Airlines' Australia-Melbourne flights in 2024, flights to all six continents are now available. Türkiye stands alone as the only country worldwide that has established air connectivity to every continent. We anticipate that AJET will be among the top three European low-cost carriers in the near future with its operations from Sabiha Gökçen Airport. Over the next five years, we expect to see both Turkish Airlines and AJET among the top three airlines in Europe.

Türkiye's leading position in its region and globally is evident not only in one specific area but also across various aspects of civil aviation, including airlines, airports, and flight networks. Leveraging its strategic location as an intercontinental bridge, Türkiye has transformed this advantage into a significant opportunity in airline transportation and has emerged as a key player in global aviation connectivity.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: As the DGCA, could you provide insights into your current collaborations with European and global civil aviation organizations, as well

as the active roles you play within these organizations?

Kemal Yüksek: The fundamental principles of ICAO, which establishes global aviation rules and standards for flight safety and aviation security, are also a top priority for Türkiye. As a founding member of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) since 1947, Türkiye actively shapes and updates ICAO's international aviation regulations and recommendations, as well as in the technical panels, committees, and working groups established within the organization. We consistently engage in ICAO meetings in collaboration with our Permanent Representation. As a result of our active cooperation and successful implementation of global aviation standards, Türkiye was re-elected as a member of the ICAO Council in 2016 after 66 years, serving until 2019. In 2025, we aim to secure re-election as a Council member and are actively working towards this goal.

In addition to ICAO, we are in close cooperation with European civil aviation organizations such as ECAC and EUROCONTROL, of which we are members. We are actively involved in decision-making processes through our membership in the commissions and working groups of these organizations.

Beyond Europe, Türkiye actively pursues regional cooperation in civil aviation. As a pioneer in establishing the D-8 Working Group on Civil Aviation, Türkiye plays a significant role and maintains close collaboration with regional aviation organizations in the Caucasus, Eurasia, Black Sea-Caspian, Middle East, and Africa. Additionally, we are in constant contact with the Organization of Turkic States (OST) member countries regarding aviation-related issues.

The dynamic nature of the aviation sector necessitates close relationships with aviation authorities in each country where flights operate. In this context, we are enhancing our position within international aviation organizations through bilateral aviation relations with other countries and active participation in regional cooperation activities. We have the capability to transform the heartfelt connections we've forged with regions sharing a common cultural and historical heritage into airline connections, guided by the principle that "What's beyond reach isn't yours."

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Could you tell us about your efforts towards ensuring the sustainable growth of aviation in our country?

Kemal Yüksek: I've previously outlined that achieving sustainable growth in aviation relies

on implementing policies across four key components: institutional, sectoral, national, and global. It's crucial that the actions taken within each of these components are aligned and integrated. We act by focusing on three focal points identified by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure: "Digitalization," "Mobility," and "Logistics."

For instance, the Corporate Transformation Model (CTM) reflects the goal of "Digitalization," which encompasses not only institutional but also sectoral restructuring in line with the era. Serving as a model for other public institutions and countries, the CTM also addresses national and global components of sustainable growth. Similarly, "Mobility" and "Logistics" encompass sub-elements driven by investments in-flight networks and airport infrastructure, contributing to sectoral, national, and global sustainable growth objectives.

We implement numerous steps and practices across various civil aviation sectors to ensure sustainable growth. From advancements in the aviation industry to certification activities and UAVs to aircraft tracking systems, we are progressing toward our sustainable growth objectives. The examples provided here illustrate that these developments directly result from our country's well-planned policies.



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✈️ Aviation Turkey: What is the current state of civil aviation in the world, and how is DGCA preparing itself for the future?

Kemal Yüksek: The global civil aviation industry faced a significant challenge and serious setbacks during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many countries were forced to scale back operations, and numerous airlines ceased operations altogether. However, our country successfully navigated this period and emerged as one of the quickest to recover from the pandemic's impact. The most crucial lesson learned from this experience is the importance of countries' ability to adapt to new conditions during times of global crisis and recession, ultimately determining the trajectory of the sector's progress.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, the importance of regional and local aviation hubs has significantly increased. Large cargo hubs such as Istanbul Airport, which are capable of meeting logistics needs and integrating various

transportation modes, have become indispensable for global aviation. Türkiye's proactive measures prior to the crisis have positioned it well to address the challenges that have arisen. While Türkiye's aspiration to become the "Global Aviation Hub" may initially suggest competition on a global scale, it is more in line with a context that can be supported by international organizations in a solidarity and cooperation approach.

On the other hand, there is a shift within global aviation with the rise of the East Asia and Pacific region. This necessitates developing our aviation relations not only with countries in our immediate geographical vicinity but also with those in Far Asia. In particular, the Turkish Airlines flight to Australia, marking its presence on all six continents, can be seen as a step towards aligning with this shift.

Due to the global economic crisis, the new trend in civil aviation is the rise of low-cost carriers. This trend is most evident in the figures

showing that the companies carrying the highest number of passengers in Europe are low-cost carriers, surpassing traditional flag carriers. This preference for low-cost carriers necessitates our country's strategic move into this market with AJET. Therefore, we closely monitor developments in global aviation not only for today but also with a long-term perspective, preparing ourselves for the future.

It can be said that the main topics on the agenda of global aviation are environmental sustainability and digitalization. Ensuring environmental awareness and increasing energy efficiency are among the most important topics for ICAO and other international organizations today. The European Green Deal aims to create an environmentally friendly aviation ecosystem. In this context, issues such as reducing airline CO2 emissions, achieving zero waste, and calculating carbon footprints are prominent. According to recent ICAO reports, the trends and technologies discussed will likely play a

crucial role in shaping the future of aviation. Topics of interest include sustainable aviation fuels, reducing the sector's carbon footprint, autonomous aircraft, electric aircraft, UAVs, and urban air mobility.

Digital transformation has become a key requirement for sustainability in the aviation industry. The primary goal of global aviation is to train qualified human resources to align with the business processes introduced by digitalization and to establish an appropriate organizational structure. In this context, our General Directorate has implemented the New Civil Aviation Approach based on three components: Automation, Corporate Transformation, and Smart-Beneficial Systems.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Could you provide a brief overview of the "Corporate Transformation Model" implemented at DGCA, which includes three separate projects: "Corporate Digital Transformation," "Digital Training System," and "Sectoral Digital Transformation?"

Kemal Yüksek: The Corporate Transformation Model (CTM) aims to restructure our organizational structure by prioritizing human resources to meet modern demands, ensure standardization, enhance corporate facilities and capabilities, and boost workforce productivity. CTM's objectives include



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reconstructing the organizational structure by analyzing tasks, developing task-specific training content, providing personnel training, and accurately measuring training outcomes and job performance. The model seeks to increase efficiency and productivity by reorganizing business processes within defined standards. Its primary aim is to align the organization's management system with data-driven rules, norms,

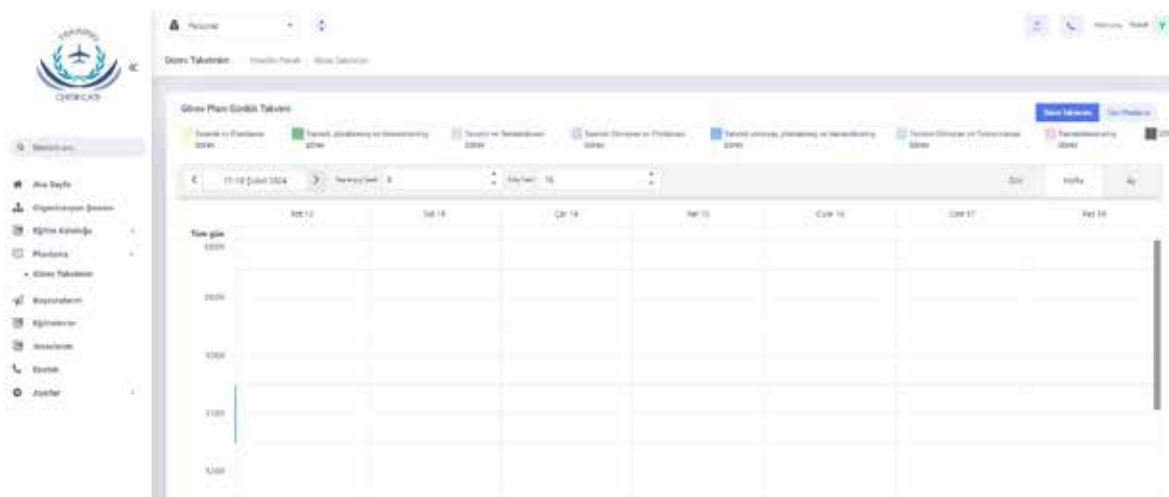
and procedures. Additionally, it involves establishing a specialized human resources system that offers training at international standards.

CTM is a project to be implemented in coordination with information and communication technologies projects, such as Aviation Information Systems Automation and Smart/Beneficial Services in Aviation. The project aims to holistically transform ICT infrastructures on a corporate scale through the

development of Corporate Transformation Software. CTM is a completely indigenous project, which also includes software and hardware projects designed to reduce dependency on foreign suppliers and minimize the outsourcing of civil aviation training.

A qualified workforce is the most critical factor in the sustainable growth of the civil aviation sector. The demand for skilled personnel in this rapidly developing sector is increasing

daily. Beyond licensed professionals such as pilots, air traffic controllers, aircraft maintenance technicians, and dispatchers, the need for well-trained personnel across all aviation sub-branches is especially high and critical compared to other sectors. Since CTM involves the renewal and transformation of business processes and functions through digital technologies, it significantly impacts the need for qualified human resources.



✈️ Aviation Turkey: Could you briefly introduce the "New Civil Aviation Model" developed by DGCA, which you described as entirely based on technology and centralized data?

Kemal Yürksek: The New Civil Aviation Model is an integrated framework that focuses on data, minimizes the potential negative impacts of human error, reshapes aviation training programs to meet the demands of digitalization, and incorporates informatics, automation, and smart/beneficial systems based on field-specific customization. As previously mentioned, it comprises three main pillars: "Corporate Transformation Model," "Aviation Automation System," and "Smart/Beneficial Aviation Services."

Within the scope of the Aviation Automation System, an international civil aviation software is being developed. The first phase of the project, the "Data Model," has been completed, and the second phase, the "Coding" phase, is underway. The application will be designed to be generic and multilingual, making it available to other countries for commercial or support purposes. Inspection management and license application process modules have been launched as part of

the project, allowing users to make active applications and transactions. The air health and incident reporting management modules are currently being tested.

As part of the Smart/Beneficial Aviation Services initiative, the General Directorate of Civil Aviation executes the Obstruction Plan Project and the UAV Tracking and Traffic Management System Project. Under the Obstruction Plan Project, the Directorate has developed software enabling the drawing of obstruction plans for airports open to civil air transportation, along with the creation of navigation aids' impact areas. Software development has been mostly completed and is currently undergoing testing. Upon full implementation in 2024, property owners will have access to construction status reports via e-government. Additionally, authorized zoning entities will be able to conduct obstruction inquiries using the software.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Certification plays a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainability of human resources within the civil aviation activities overseen by DGCA. Could you please provide an update on the current certification processes at DGCA, as well as insights into the Global

Certification System you've implemented and the training systems you utilize?

Kemal Yürksek: To ensure the sustainability of our human resources, ongoing efforts are being made within the infrastructure of the Corporate Transformation Model, initiated by our General Directorate for the training, certification, and licensing of aviation sector employees in our country. As part of these efforts, the content and competency of centrally provided training programs, as well as the exams conducted during and at the conclusion of these training sessions, will be standardized. Through this system, trained personnel will obtain certification and licensing aligned with their respective roles in the sector, having undergone training courses with appropriate content and fair evaluation processes. This model aims to implement a global certification system in civil aviation, offering training programs in six languages specified by ICAO. This will give us a say in the global civil aviation training market and contribute to the national economy.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Could you provide information about the number of licensed UAV pilots in Turkey? Additionally, could you elaborate on UAV flight permit applications and their evaluation

processes? Lastly, as DGCA, what regulations and bylaws are you preparing regarding the flight and use of UAVs and drones in civil airspace?

Kemal Yürksek: In our country, UAVs are classified into four categories based on their take-off weight: UAV-0, UAV-1, UAV-2, and UAV-3. Authorized training institutions issue certificates for UAV-0 and UAV-1, while our General Directorate issues licenses for UAV-2 and UAV-3. These certificates and licenses are stored in the UAV Registration System, which currently contains individuals' ID information. Currently, there are 518,615 UAV-0 pilots, 992,644 UAV-1 pilots, 324 UAV-2 pilots, and 1 UAV-3 pilot registered in the UAV Registration System.

Regarding the UAV flight application and evaluation process, users apply for flight authorization by entering information such as coordinates, altitude, and the purpose of the flight in the region they intend to fly over. Our General Directorate approves these applications by securing the endorsement of stakeholder institutions, including the Local Administrative Authorities responsible for the relevant region, the General Staff, the General Directorate of State Airports Authority, and the Notam Office.



As known, the DGCA establishes procedures and principles governing the import, sale, registration, airworthiness, and user requirements of civil UAV systems to be utilized in Turkish civil airspace. It also sets guidelines for UAV operations in accordance with the SHT-İHA (CAD-UAV, Civil Aviation Directives - Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) Directive. Currently, this directive is under revision to align with EU Legislation, specifically EASA 945 and EASA 947 Directives. Furthermore, efforts are underway to develop the SHT-UTM (CAD-UTM, Civil Aviation Directives - Unmanned Aircraft Systems Traffic Management) draft directive to regulate unmanned aerial vehicle traffic management.

Additionally, our goal is to seamlessly integrate UAVs into the current airspace using an accessible, efficient, safe,

environmentally friendly, and digital approach. We are initiating the UAV Tracking and Traffic Management System (İHATTYS) Project to achieve this. This project aims to mitigate safety and security concerns associated with UAVs. The project aims to enable DGCA to safely and securely manage all UAV operations in our country without requiring any hardware installation on UAVs.

Determining standards that will facilitate the use of UAVs in cargo transportation, considering international standardization efforts, and licensing companies intending to operate in drone transportation are among the objectives for the upcoming period.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Given the dynamic structure of aviation, eVTOL aircraft are poised to play a significant role in civil aviation in the near

future. Could you provide insight into DGCA's current activities regarding eVTOL aircraft? Additionally, what regulations and legislation are being developed for the flight and use of eVTOL aircraft in civil airspace, encompassing both private and commercial purposes?

Kemal Yüksek: As mentioned previously, one of the emerging trends in global aviation, as highlighted in ICAO's annual reports, is the development of electric aircraft. This trend is significant for its potential to promote environmentally friendly aviation, energy conservation, and cost reduction objectives.

As the capacities of the batteries used in eVTOLs and other UAVs improve, urban air mobility in Europe is expected to increase significantly. This trend in civil aviation

underscores the need for airspace regulation as a top priority. The UAV Tracking and Traffic Management System project, developed by our General Directorate to facilitate the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, along with the SHT-UTM Directive, represents fundamental and prioritized steps taken in this direction.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: It was noted that through the software developed by DGCA within the scope of the Obstruction Plan Project, the obstruction plans of airports open to civil air transportation can be drawn. Could you provide details about this software? Is it currently operational? Additionally, are there preparations and arrangements being made for UAVs and eVTOLs while preparing the obstruction plans?

Kemal Yüksek: The Airport Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS), established by ICAO Annex 14 standards, and the CNS areas, created under EUR Doc 015, keep constructions around airports under control and ensure the maintenance of aviation safety. Airport obstruction plans and CNS (communication, navigation, and surveillance) impact areas are typically developed using CAD (computer-aided design) or GIS (geographical information systems) software. However, these processes are often reliant

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INTERVIEW

on individuals, resulting in significant margins of error, time consumption, labor, and cost inefficiencies. To address these challenges, DGCA OLS/CNS software has been developed and implemented. This software facilitates the creation of airport hazard plans and CNS surfaces while also enabling relevant institutions and citizens to inquire about permissible construction heights based on these surfaces.

The DGCA OLS/CNS software allows for swiftly creating airport obstruction plans. Users can input data such as the number of runways, coordinates, and approach categories. The software generates plans within seconds. Similarly, CNS BRAs can be quickly generated by entering coordinates and types of CNS devices. Property owners can access detailed reports through the E-Government platform. These reports indicate whether their property falls within the boundaries of the obstruction plan or CNS impact area. Additionally, the software offers services (WMS, WFS, WCS) to municipalities, airport operators, and other relevant institutions for studying and evaluating hazard plans and CNS impact areas.

In our new version, which is currently under development, we aim to create three-dimensional airport obstruction restriction surfaces and CNS impact areas. We are also working on expanding



inquiry options, diversifying report retrieval methods, and generating VFR flight routes for unmanned aerial vehicles, helicopters, and similar aerial vehicles through the software. Additionally, we plan to conduct simulations based on the aircraft that will utilize these routes. It's worth noting that obstruction plans encompass all aircraft using the relevant airport, with separate plans not being created for UAVs and e-VTOLs.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: As DGCA, what kind of activities are you carrying out to achieve full aircraft certification capability and establish the necessary infrastructure?

Kemal Yüksek: As you may be aware, certification activities encompass two main categories: project certification and organization certification. DGCA is primarily focused on developing and updating our certification legislation

to achieve full certification capability and establish the necessary infrastructure, always with a steadfast commitment to aviation safety. In these updates, we prioritize alignment with international regulations and address the sector's needs. Furthermore, we actively pursue mutual recognition agreements with other aviation authorities, including EASA, FAA, and others.

In addition to our administrative efforts, we also undertake technical initiatives. These include digitizing processes to enhance the control of certification procedures and operations, as well as developing a digital transformation model to effectively manage training materials and processes required for technical personnel. Through these endeavors, we aim to

establish a dynamic structure that bolsters organizational and project-level certification activities.

Efforts are underway to achieve full aircraft certification capability and establish the necessary infrastructure. Certification procedures have started to be carried out in Türkiye. In recent years, the HÜRKUŞ Trainer Aircraft received certification, and Türkiye issued its first 'Type Certificate' for the domestically designed hot air balloon. By the end of 2023, 118 hot air balloons were manufactured, with 17 exported, marking the first successful export of a civil aircraft designed and produced in Türkiye. Certification activities for various domestic aircraft and their components, including the GÖKBEY Helicopter, are currently ongoing.

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✈️ Aviation Turkey: As you have stated, certification procedures have started to be carried out nationally. In this context, the HÜRKUŞ Basic Trainer Aircraft has already been certified, and type certification was granted to the first domestically designed hot air balloon. Could you provide further details to our readers about DGCA's ongoing certification activities for domestic and national aircraft, particularly focusing on the T625 GÖKBAY Helicopter?

Kemal Yüksek: As stipulated in Presidential Decree No. 4, our General Directorate is

responsible for establishing airworthiness standards for aircraft, devices, and components in compliance with international regulations. This includes issuing, inspecting, renewing, canceling, and maintaining records of necessary documents and certificates.

In this context, as you mentioned recently, our General Directorate has obtained the Design Organization Approval (DOA) as part of the international civil certification process for TEI-TS1400, Türkiye's first domestic and national turboshaft helicopter

engine, which will power the T625 GÖKBAY Helicopter. Following inspections to ensure compliance with relevant regulations, the DGCA has confirmed TEI's design competency in accordance with international certification criteria. With this approval, TEI will carry out the certification of domestically and nationally developed engines under this authority, and it has become the first company in Türkiye to receive Design Organization Approval (DOA) for civil aviation engine certification. Turkish Technic conducts certification procedures encompassing

airworthiness and environmental certifications for projects such as passenger aircraft modifications. In these endeavors, it grants new authorizations to design and production organizations while also conducting audits to ensure their ongoing compliance with international regulations and criteria. Furthermore, these organizations undertake design activities within the framework of international legislation and standards, with certification experts from our General Directorate participating in, overseeing, and evaluating their



compliance demonstration efforts. These verification methods may include design declarations, drawings, analyses, safety assessments, laboratory and ground tests, and flight trials. We prioritize the training and development of our certification experts within the framework of the Corporate Transformation Model, recognizing that investing in our personnel is an investment in our future.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: What are your expectations and objectives for Turkish Civil Aviation in the 2030s?

Kemal Yüksek: Our

Directorate General's objectives and expectations for 2030 are outlined in the Strategic Plan 2024-2028. Within this framework, we've established five strategic objectives in alignment with national high-level policy documents.

The first objective is to enhance the safety and security culture across the sector, while the second one aims to cultivate the sector's potential and facilitate continuous development. Within this objective, we have outlined several sub-goals, including standardizing training programs within

the civil aviation sector to enhance employee competency, boosting civil aviation's contribution to the regional economy, implementing efficient digital information management practices in the aviation sector, and effectively overseeing the certification processes for domestic and national products.

The third objective is to enhance Türkiye's influence in the realm of international civil aviation. Within this scope, our goal is to position Türkiye as a top choice for civil aviation training, actively participate in defining and

implementing international standards, and serve as a model for other nations through the projects and initiatives we undertake. Our fourth objective is to promote environmental sustainability and social responsibility within the sector. To this end, we seek to regulate the utilization of sustainable aviation fuels in accordance with international regulations. Lastly, our fifth goal entails restructuring the organization to meet the evolving needs of the sector. This involves prioritizing innovation and sustainability to drive sectoral development.



These five main objectives outline the roadmap that our General Directorate will follow until 2030, with our primary focus centered around CTM, automation, and smart/beneficial services.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: What specific practices, projects, and plans does DGCA intend to implement to achieve these strategic objectives? Could you provide details regarding the steps you will take to realize these objectives?

Kemal Yüksek: In line with the 2024 Presidential Program, our foremost priority this year is to update the Turkish Civil Aviation Law to align with sectoral demands and current developments. To this end, we intend to draft legislation by year-

end in collaboration with relevant institutions and organizations. We can outline the steps to be taken based on the DGCA 2024-2028 Strategic Plan as follows:

As the Turkish Civil Aviation Authority, our primary responsibility and main objective is to cultivate a culture of safety and security in civil aviation. In this context, we aim to increase our ICAO Effective Implementation (EI) ratio from its current level of 84 points to 90 by the end of 2028.

To enhance the global competitiveness of the private sector, we intend to increase both the quality and quantity of integrated services available through the e-government portal, ensuring the efficient

utilization of new-generation technologies in digital government services. Presently, 25 percent of our services are accessible via e-government, and our objective is to elevate this figure to 90 percent within the next five years.

Additionally, the 12th National Development Plan sets the target of supporting airline companies for the development of regional airline transportation. As the Directorate General, we are committed to advancing connecting/transit flights within this context and plan to increase the number of transit flights from 14 to 24.

R&D efforts to promote environmentally friendly aircraft will be encouraged,

and producing and utilizing sustainable aviation fuels is a key target for the upcoming period. We plan to increase the number of climate change adaptation plans to 25 and the number of airports receiving the Green Check Certification to 50. During this period, we will intensify our efforts to organize all airports in a smart and environmentally friendly manner using renewable technologies.

By the end of 2028, we aim to significantly increase the number of sector-specific training programs provided through CTM. Additionally, we plan to expand the reach of our training programs to 90 countries.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: As we conclude our interview, is there anything else you'd like to share or any message you'd like to convey to our readers?

Kemal Yüksek: First, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share the activities and goals of our Directorate General, as well as the achievements we are all proud of as a country. Türkiye has created a success story in civil aviation that amazes the world, and we believe this progress will continue in the coming years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to this success 🇹🇷



Vision and Collaboration is the Key to Making Our Vibrant Industry Sustainable

Marie Owens Thomsen, Senior Vice President, Sustainability, and Chief Economist, IATA

The aviation industry has shown phenomenal resilience in its recovery from the Pandemic. The question must now be: “where do we go from here?” With the public’s appetite for travel undimmed, airlines have been adding capacity and restoring services. Supply chain concerns are holding back some airlines from exploiting potential opportunities – Boeing’s well-publicised troubles, along with other supply chain concerns, are certainly curtailing growth – but airlines still have expansion options, and in the meantime, capacity discipline will help to restore load factors to pre-pandemic highs.

All this bodes well for the near-term outlook for the industry. Profits are slowly growing again, despite higher costs across the board. That is very welcome and indeed necessary considering the amount of debt that airlines had to take on during the pandemic. It is

also important to remember that while the profitability trend is on an upward curve, it is still not strong enough to cover the cost of capital. The industry is uniquely fragile in its value chain, and also uniquely impacted by the rising costs related to the energy transition. This needs to be addressed holistically to allow the industry to achieve both financial and environmental sustainability.

Our commitment to reach net-zero CO₂ by 2050 depends on a wholesale transformation of our energy supply, as well as continuing technology and operational efforts across the air travel system. These will not come cheap.

The energy transition from traditional jet fuel to Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) offers the bulk of our opportunity to cut emissions this side of 2050. SAF is building from a low base. In 2024 we expect 0.5% of airlines’ fuel to be supplied in the form of SAF, and next year it should

cross the 1% threshold. In million tonnes, production needs to rise from 0.5 Mt in 2023 to 500 Mt in 2050 – an increase by a factor of 1’000. While challenging, it is possible, and it is also necessary. We must achieve sustainable aviation so that we can continue to provide people with all that air transportation makes possible.

What aviation enables seems more important than ever in today’s world. I believe air connectivity has a vital role to play not just economically, but also socially. We are seeing a planet that is very divided and polarized, with many countries turning their attention inward, resulting in more protectionism and unilateralism. As an economist, I cannot welcome such steps. It seems self-evident from history that the more we cooperate, and the more we are ready to accept new ideas, and the more we open ourselves up to competition, the greater

the welfare gains for all. The airline industry itself is proof of this. Airline deregulation has given passengers more choice than could have been dreamed of a generation or two ago. But that required governments with a vision, working together and with the industry, to bring it about.

I began this article posing the question “where do we go from here”? The answer, I believe, is in a partnership with governments to safeguard our vibrant, competitive aviation industry while incentivizing the most rapid energy transition possible for aviation to meet its sustainability commitments. The same process of international cooperation and global standards that has made air travel continually safer and more efficient, can also make it sustainable. Unilateral, piecemeal approaches will not work. A collective vision and radical collaboration are the keys to our sustainable future.

PEGASUS to Improve the Experience of its Guests and Employees with AI

Over the past 30 years, technology has rapidly evolved with significant milestones, such as the widespread adoption of the internet, the evolution of mobile devices, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics, causing profound changes in every field. Today, a brand new door has been opened with generative artificial intelligence. Initiatives like OpenAI's ChatGPT have democratised AI, making AI technologies unlimited, cost-effective, and user-friendly for a much wider audience. During this process, keeping up with the pace of technology has become even more critical for companies to increase operational efficiency, sustain competitive advantage, and meet customer expectations.

The airline industry is one of the sectors that must put technology and innovation at its core to continuously offer a safer, faster, and more comfortable service experience. At Pegasus Airlines, we started our digital transformation in 2018 and continue our journey by focusing on the optimal way to harness artificial intelligence. With this purpose, we introduced our FlyGPT Program, which supports our goal of becoming one of the top three airlines globally regarding technological utilisation. Within this

program, we conduct valuable research, training programs, and projects that aim to position AI in the most effective way to improve the experiences of our guests and employees, optimise our business processes, and increase our operational efficiency. This programme also allows us to bring all company employees together under one roof for AI training, harmonising the knowledge level across all departments. Recently, we hosted Open AI Academy training sessions in partnership with MS and NTTData. These sessions were designed to demonstrate the benefits of Generative AI to our management teams responsible for guiding our AI strategy and the experts across our business units.

Under the FlyGPT program, we continue to develop our long-standing AI applications in areas such as dynamic pricing, determining in-flight catering quantities, and guest insights with new features. For instance, we are designing the algorithms for the loading of our catering on-board to become smarter with new inputs.

The 'Plan Your Trip with ChatGPT' feature, which we recently added to our digital assistant FlyBot, allows our guests to plan their trips with the support of a digital assistant. As a result, we became the first



Barış Findık, Chief Information Officer (CIO),
Pegasus Airlines

airline in Türkiye to offer a travel planning service with ChatGPT integration, recommending routes that reflect guests' specific requests. This collaboration with ChatGPT reinforces the transformative role of AI and conversational assistants in the airline industry, providing a significantly improved level of convenience for travel enthusiasts.

Another FlyGPT project is our FLYDEA suggestion system, where our employees can propose innovative ideas. Thanks to ChatGPT integration in FLYDEA, our employees can conduct research, gather information, examine other airline applications and new trends globally, and therefore enrich their suggestions with AI. In the next step, we will activate features that will allow the viewing of comparisons of previously entered suggestions and the evaluations received for those suggestions.

Another application, KEYGPT, enables our call centre teams to be assisted by generative AI. By supporting the team in searching for documents in the information portal and consolidating information, we aim to respond to our

guests in the shortest time possible, thus increasing guest satisfaction and optimising our operational costs. Similarly, our 'We have a wheelchair assistant' project launching soon, which aims to elevate our guest experience and improve our planning performance. With AI-supported data analytics, we will be able to anticipate and plan for the needs of guests who have not declared their need for a wheelchair before their flight.

In summary, AI and Generative AI have the potential to bring about significant beneficial transformations across many industries, including the airline industry, through their ground-breaking innovations. We believe that with the right scenarios, AI will create added value by providing our guests with a convenient and unique travel experience, an end-to-end digitalised working experience for our employees, and ensuring operational efficiency for our company. At Pegasus, we will continue to pursue our strategy with our FlyGPT program, which we launched to realise this immense potential 🌟



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*Gael Méheust
President & CEO, CFM International*



THY Deepens its Long-Standing Partnership with Airbus & Rolls-Royce Through Historic Aircraft and Engine Orders

In December 2023, Turkish Airlines (THY) placed an order for 150 Airbus' best-selling A321neo and 70 of the world's most modern and efficient A350 widebody aircraft (50 A350-900s, 15 A350-1000s and 5 A350F freighters). Turkish Airlines had ordered further 10 A350-900s in September 1, 2023. The engines (Trent XWB) for the A350 Family will be provided by Rolls-Royce. On December 15, 2023 Rolls-Royce announced

that Turkish Airlines would procure 120 Trent XWB-84 engines for the 60 A350-900s and 40 Rolls-Royce Trent XWB-97 engines for the 15 A350-1000s and 5 A350F freighters ordered from Airbus and to be delivered between 2025 and 2033. With this agreement, Turkish Airlines has become the world's largest operator of Trent XWB engines powering the Airbus A350.

In order to support and grow Türkiye's position

in the global aviation Turkish Airlines, Airbus & Rolls-Royce have decided to expand their long-standing partnership to the strategic level. In this context Türkiye's national flag carrier Turkish Airlines and Airbus have unveiled a Strategic Türkiye Enhanced Program (STEP) at a ceremony held on April 29, 2024 at the THY headquarters in İstanbul in the presence of the Turkish Ministers of Trade, Industry and Technology, Transport and Infrastructure,

and Deputy Minister of National Defense as well as representatives of Rolls-Royce, top Turkish aerospace companies and the British Consul General, and undersecretaries of France and Spain. Guillaume FAURY, CEO of Airbus, Christian SCHERER, CEO of Airbus Commercial Aircraft Division, and Rob WATSON, President of Rolls-Royce Civil Aviation, were also present at the ceremony.

Through STEP, Airbus,



aircraft from the A220 to the A350 includes Turkish supplied parts. Over 3,500 Turkish aeronautical jobs are directly supported by Airbus. The accumulated volume spent by Airbus in Türkiye exceeded 4 Billion

Dollar at the end of 2023 and - supported by STEP - will exceed 6 to 7 Billion Dollar by 2030.

STEP was created by Airbus and its partners in Türkiye to develop the Turkish Aviation Industry in line with Turkish Airlines

growth ambition over the next decade as well as Türkiye's aim to develop a globally recognized, robust aerospace industry.

In the context of STEP, Airbus intends to broaden its collaboration and

Turkish Airlines and their partners aim to grow collaboration and economic value in the country over the next 15 years.

Türkiye has been an integral part of Airbus' supply chain for over 20 years. A wealth of expertise, technological advancements and a highly skilled workforce has been established throughout the Türkiye's aerospace sector. Today every Airbus commercial





“We thank Turkish Airlines for their trust and we are honoured to both support their growth as one of the world’s elite airlines and develop our partnership with Türkiye through the new STEP programme we are unveiling today,” said Airbus CEO Guillaume FAURY. “The program will provide the framework for Airbus to further broaden its collaboration with Türkiye and support Turkish Airlines’ growth ambitions, with a particular focus on supply chain development, skills and sustainability,” FAURY added.

presence in Türkiye focused on four main pillars; pillar one supports the development of the Turkish supply chain and the industrial capabilities of Turkish Aviation and Aerospace Sector, pillar two supports Turkish Airlines’ and its group of companies growth ambitions and operations, pillar three supports initiatives in the area of sustainability transformation and pillar four supports the increase of the Aviation Sector’s skills base.

Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee, Prof. Ahmet BOLAT stated: “Over the past two decades, Turkish Airlines and the Turkish Aviation Industry have achieved

remarkable milestones. Today, Türkiye’s aviation industry seamlessly integrates design, manufacturing, and logistics to produce critical aircraft parts, structures, and engine components, and to provide engine maintenance services to the global aviation sector. As a significant contributor to this impressive transformation, we continue to drive momentum in every aspect of our operations. To build on the strong foundation already established and to explore new horizons in the aerospace industry, we are pleased to announce the launch of STEP, the Strategic Türkiye Enhanced Programme, in partnership with

Airbus. Through this initiative, anchored in our commitment to performance, competitiveness, and quality, Turkish Airlines aims to create a sustainable and mutually beneficial environment for both the Turkish aviation industry and manufacturers. Given the rapid advancements in technology, today marks the commencement of our efforts to help cultivate Turkish aviation companies into prospective suppliers, aligning closely with Airbus’ strategic objectives and their newly identified business domains. With Türkiye’s growing potential, we are steadfast in propelling the aviation industry towards even greater heights.”

The ceremony also witnessed the signing of a joint statement between Turkish Airlines (THY) and Rolls-Royce. Rolls-Royce CEO Tufan ERGİNBİLGİÇ signed the joint statement on behalf of Rolls-Royce and Chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines Prof. Dr. Ahmet BOLAT signed the joint statement on behalf of THY.

As part of its long-term strategy and commitment to Türkiye, Rolls-Royce is working on the realisation of a number of industrial initiatives. These include the development of a competitive Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) capability and the expansion of the supply network in Türkiye. Rolls-Royce anticipates that

these projects could have a significantly positive impact on the Turkish economy in the coming years.

Rolls-Royce already has well-established relationships with the Turkish aviation supply chain. Following this historic agreement, Rolls-Royce will work in partnership with the industry to increase its supply activities in Türkiye.

Rolls-Royce CEO Tufan ERGİNBİLGİÇ said: "Türkiye is a strategically important market for Rolls-Royce in all our business lines. We are delighted with Turkish Airlines' confidence in our Trent XWB engines. We look forward to working with Turkish Airlines and our partners to utilise our advanced aerospace engineering experience to benefit the Turkish economy, enhance the industry's capabilities and develop its role in the energy transition. On behalf of our company, I am personally very excited about the strengthening of our relationship with Turkish Airlines and the Republic of Türkiye."

Prof. Dr. Ahmet BOLAT, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines, said: "Rolls-Royce has been an important partner for Turkish Airlines for the



Rolls Royce Ceo Tufan Erginbilgiç

past 15 years. With this latest acquisition, we are preparing to become the largest operator of XWB engines. This acquisition is an important milestone in our mutually beneficial strategic partnership for Rolls-Royce and Türkiye. As part of this strategy, we have agreed to establish a 'Steering Committee', through which the projects identified will be executed based on performance, competitiveness and quality criteria. The remarkable growth of the Turkish aviation industry in the last two decades positions this committee to elevate the ecosystem to new heights and provide

greater value-added contributions to not only Türkiye but also the global aviation industry. Through this initiative, we aim to create a sustainable and mutually beneficial environment for both the Turkish aviation industry and Rolls-Royce."

The Trent XWB engines, which are assembled and tested in Derby, UK will deliver 25% lower CO2 emissions compared to previous generation aircraft. Turkish Airlines (THY) selected Rolls-Royce's Trent 700 engines to power A330 aircraft for the first time in 2009, and since then the long-term partnership between THY and Rolls-Royce has continued

to grow and develop. THY also ordered Airbus A350 aircraft powered with Trent XWB Engines which entered into service starting from 2020. As of December 2023, THY already operates 40 Rolls-Royce Trent XWB-84 engines on the A350-900s and 26 Trent 700 engines on the A330s. In April 2018 THY selected GEnx-13 Engines for its B787 Dreamliner (25+5) aircraft but for its new B787 Dreamliner aircraft THY is also evaluating other candidates including the Trent 1000 of Rolls-Royce, which has been designed and optimized specifically to power the Boeing 787 Dreamliner Family of aircraft ➡

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With the addition of a second runway in December, 2023, Sabiha Gökçen Airport is poised to double its traffic capacity. As Türkiye's second largest airport, ISG has emerged stronger post-pandemic and ranked as the 8th busiest airport in Europe in Q1, 2024. In 2023, ISG served 37.1 million passengers, marking the highest annual figure in its history.

Connectivity and Convenience

Serving Istanbul, one of Europe's most populous cities with a population of about 16 million, ISG offers excellent connectivity via two major highways and a metro line, bridging the distance between Pendik (12 KM), Kadıköy (31 KM), and Taksim (40 KM).

The M4 Pendik-Sabiha Gökçen Metro line, launched in 2022, solidifies ISG's status as the preferred city airport. This 7.4 KM line with 23 stations can transport 1.2 million people daily, reducing travel time between the airport and Kadıköy to just 50 minutes.

Exceptional Customer Experience

ISG's compact and well-organised terminal design ensures seamless navigation and convenient access to



shopping and dining options. With continuous and numerous enhancements including new gates, premium Wi-Fi, modern control points and self-service bag drop points, ISG prioritises customer satisfaction.

For travelers seeking rest, ISG Airport Hotel offers a comfortable and enjoyable stay for passengers to wind down from their busy work and traveling schedule. The spacious and tastefully furnished 128-room hotel is located just next to the terminal and is easily accessible with the free shuttle service.

For those looking for gifts, luxury brands and duty-free shopping as well as dining options, ISG is a one-stop shopping and dining destination for all. Anchored by Switzerland-based Duty-Free operator DUFY, it offers an attractive assortment of core travel retail categories such as liquor, tobacco, perfume and cosmetics. The airport also offers a refined selection of local food and souvenir brands that creates an immersive sense of place showcasing Türkiye's cultural heritage and specialities.

Innovative Technology

ISG continually enhances its services through technological innovation. The new chip ID card system allows Turkish passengers to breeze through

their boarding gates, monitored by an artificial intelligence-based image processing system for security. Coupled with the e-passport system, Turkish citizens over the age of 18 with chip-embedded passports can scan their passports at e-passport counters for a fast and easy journey through passport control.

Further enhancing airport guests' experience is the ISG mobile app that allows passengers to check in for flights, track and view flight status, navigate the airport and access information on deals, campaigns and promotions available at the airport. The app also features Türkiye's first airport loyalty program, ISG Portpal.

With these comprehensive services and innovation, ISG offers a seamless and enjoyable travel experience for all its guests.



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Turkish Airlines' Historic Order for 150 A321neo and 80 A350 Family Aircraft

Aiming to increase its passenger numbers by 74% to over 170 million and to grow its fleet to over 800 aircraft in the next decade, Turkish Airlines, will procure some 600 aircraft including 400 narrow-body and 200 wide-body from both Airbus and Boeing, in the next decade to achieve 2033 Strategy and to compensate for retirements on the way.

For narrow-body requirement in December 2023, THY ordered 250 A321neo (150 firm + 100 optional) and a total of 105 A350 (60 A350-900 + 20 optional, 15 A350-100, 5 A350F + 5 optional) wide-body aircraft from Airbus. Both aircraft types

incorporate advanced technologies, achieving remarkable improvements in fuel burn, operating costs, CO2 emissions, and noise reduction, underscoring Turkish Airlines' commitment to sustainability and passenger comfort.

THY also carry out discussions with the Boeing for the procurement of a high number of B737 MAX narrow-body and B787 Dreamliner wide-body airliners. It is also said that the aforementioned 600 aircraft order will also cover some 25 to 30 B77X aircraft. As of March 18, 2024 the Boeing part of the fleet investment is still under negotiation.

In line with 2033 Strategy to expand its fleet size to 813 aircraft by 2033, Turkish Airlines announced a monumental expansion of its fleet with the acquisition of up to 355 state-of-the-art Airbus aircraft on December 15, 2023. According to THY announcement within the scope of this historic order the airline had made firm orders for 230 jets (150 A321neo and 80 A350 Family aircraft) and placed purchasing rights for an additional 125 aircraft. In the statement issued by the Turkish Airlines' Press Office on December 15, it was underlined that the firm order for 60 A350-900 aircraft also included 10 A350-900s that Turkish



by İbrahim Sünnetçi

Airlines had ordered in September 1, 2023 and thus covered only 50 new aircraft. The airline's confirmed order purchase, which includes 150 Airbus' best-selling A321neo and 70 of the world's most modern and efficient A350 widebody aircraft (50 A350-900s, 15 A350-1000s and 5 A350F freighters), has a catalogue price of more than 40 Billion USD. This follows two orders from the THY for 4 A350-900s in July 2023 and 10 A350-900s in September 2023. This latest order will take Turkish Airlines' total



orderbook for Airbus aircraft to 504, of which some 220 are already delivered.

The engines (Trent XWB) for the A350 Family will be provided by Rolls-Royce. Turkish Airlines, the national flag carrier of Türkiye, said the deal also includes a separate order for Rolls-Royce to provide maintenance services and spare parts for the A350 jets' engines. The Trent XWB engines, which are assembled and tested in Derby, UK will deliver 25% lower CO2 emissions compared to previous generation aircraft. On December 15, 2023 Rolls-Royce announced that Turkish Airlines would order 100 Trent XWB-84 engines for the A350-900s and 40 Rolls-Royce Trent XWB-97 engines for the A350-1000s and A350F freighters ordered from Airbus and to be delivered between 2025 and 2033. Turkish Airlines

(THY) selected Rolls-Royce's Trent 700 engines to power A330 aircraft for the first time in 2009, and since then the long-term partnership between THY and Rolls-Royce has continued to grow and develop. THY also ordered Airbus A350 aircraft powered with Trent XWB Engines which entered into service starting from 2020. As of December 2023, THY already operates 40 Rolls-Royce Trent XWB-84 engines on the A350-900s and 26 Trent 700 engines on the A330s. In April 2018 THY selected GEnx-13 Engines for its B787 Dreamliner (25+5) aircraft but for its new B787 Dreamliner aircraft THY is also evaluating other candidates including the Trent 1000 of Rolls-Royce, which has been designed and optimized specifically to power the Boeing 787 Dreamliner Family of aircraft.

This strategic acquisition underscores Turkish Airlines'

commitment to enhancing its operational efficiency, environmental stewardship, and passenger comfort. In line with this significant fleet expansion, Turkish Airlines, the national flag carrier of Türkiye, plans to continue to reinforce its status as an airline with one of the world's most comprehensive flight networks. The addition of these Airbus aircraft will further enhance the airline's ability to connect Türkiye to the farthest corners of the globe, offering its passengers even more destinations and travel options while maintaining the highest standards of service and connectivity that Turkish Airlines is renowned for.

On the new order, Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee, Prof. Dr. Ahmet BOLAT stated: "This landmark order is more than an expansion; It's a testament to our dedication to innovation, operational excellence, and a sustainable future. The addition of these advanced Airbus aircraft to our fleet will not only enhance our operational capabilities but also significantly contribute to our environmental goals. This investment is a crucial milestone in the further evolution of Türkiye's aviation industry. By modernizing our fleet with more efficient and environmentally friendly aircraft, we are reinforcing our leading position in global aviation and contributing to

the nation's prominence as an aviation hub.

Furthermore, this expansion will also have a considerable positive impact on Türkiye's tourism sector. Enhanced flight operations and increased connectivity, thanks to these state-of-the-art aircraft, will attract more international tourists, boosting the tourism economy. This will not only showcase Türkiye's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty to a wider audience but also support the overall growth of the country. With our home base in Istanbul, which straddles continents, we continue our mission of bridging people from all over the world. These new aircraft are not just a step forward for Turkish Airlines but represent a leap forward for the broader aviation and tourism industries in Türkiye, guiding us towards an even brighter future."

"This order for the latest generation aircraft is a demonstration of the bold vision by Turkish Airlines. The A350-900, A350-1000, A350F and A321 will all be flagship aircraft in their respective category and efficiency drivers to shape the airline's future and sustainable expansion, with more range, less fuel, noise and emissions and best cabin in class. The opening into the A350-1000 and the A350F highlights the cross-model value of the A350 Family and reinforces our long-lasting partnership with Turkish Airlines and



Türkiye's aviation sector overall and we are proud to accompany Türkiye's connection to the world with our state-of-the-art aircraft," commented Christian SCHERER, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer and Head of International.

A significant portion of the manufacturing process for the THY's new aircraft is expected to take place in the UK. All the wings will be designed in Filton, Bristol, and assembled in North Wales, supporting hundreds of manufacturing jobs in the UK aerospace supply chain. Thus, UK Prime Minister Rishi SUNAK and Business and Trade Secretary Kemi BADENOCHE have welcomed the historic deal for Airbus to provide 220 aircraft for Turkish Airlines, which will be worth billions of pounds to the UK and will support thousands of high-skilled jobs across the

UK. The British Government said December 15, 2023 deal includes 70 aircraft powered by Rolls-Royce. "This landmark deal between Turkish Airlines, Airbus and Rolls-Royce demonstrates that the sky's the limit for the UK's thriving aerospace sector," British Prime Minister Rishi SUNAK said in a statement issued on the same day. Business and Trade Secretary Kemi BADENOCHE said, "This is a big win for the UK's world-leading aerospace sector and one that will help secure high-skilled jobs across the country and drive economic growth."

On the THY's new order, Rolls-Royce CEO Tufan ERGINBILGIC said: "Today's announcement marks an exciting and truly historic day for Rolls-Royce. It is proof that the actions we are taking to transform Rolls-Royce into a high

performing and competitive company underpinned by profitable growth are working. The Trent XWB is the perfect engine platform to support Turkish Airlines as it continues to grow. This order will make Turkish Airlines the largest Trent XWB operator in the world, and I would like to thank them for putting their trust in Rolls-Royce..."

The A321neo is the largest aircraft in Airbus' A320neo Family, offering unparalleled range and performance. By incorporating new generation engines and Sharklets, the A321neo brings a 50% noise reduction and more than 20% fuel savings and CO₂ reduction compared to previous generation single-aisle aircraft. Having the widest single-aisle cabin in the sky, the aircraft is the perfect contender for maximizing comfort.

The A350 is the world's most modern and efficient widebody aircraft and the long-range leader in the 300-410 seater category, flying efficiently on any sector from short-haul to ultra-long-haul routes up to 9,700nm. Its clean sheet design includes state-of-the-art technologies, aerodynamics, lightweight materials and latest generation engines that together deliver 25% advantage in fuel burn, operating costs and CO₂ emissions, as well as 50% noise reduction compared to previous generation competitor aircraft. This makes the aircraft a good neighbor and global citizen wherever it flies. The A350 Family has two versions: the A350-900, and the longer fuselage A350-1000, both offering an ultimate passenger experience even on the longest of flights. Its innovative design delivers a true feeling of spaciousness, with wide seats, high ceilings and alluring ambient lighting.

The A350F features the largest main deck cargo door and a fuselage length optimized for cargo operations. Over 70% of the airframe is made of advanced materials, which together with efficient Rolls-Royce engines generate an advantage of at least 20% lower fuel burn and CO₂ emission over its current closest competitor 🌱

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“The A220-300 is Now Proven to be a Very Efficient Aircraft”

President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of airBaltic, Mr. Martin Gauss shared with us how did they see Türkiye's position in airBaltic's future business projection

Aviation Turkey: First of all, thank you for sparing time for our readers. Can we start our interview by getting an overview of 2023 from airBaltic's point of view? Can you elaborate on airBaltic's performance in terms of the number

of passengers, revenues, profitability, destinations and fleet?

Martin GAUSS: We're not reporting the full-year figures, but I can give guidance on the passenger side. Our nine-month results were 3.4 million passengers, and we will go about 4 million, of course, by the end of this year. However, what we had formally for the nine-month result was 3.4 million passengers. We gave guidance that it will be more than 4 million and, in this number, the important

part is we also fly more than a million passengers for other airlines leased out for Lufthansa group as we did last year and will also do this year, so our productivity is significantly higher. The total passenger carried by us is larger than that. On the revenue side, we exceeded for the first time in the nine months €502 Million, and we gave guidance that it would be more than €650 Million in revenue before the full year. The final numbers here will come when the full-year results in March 2024.

On the flights, we had reported 32,000, and these are only the commercial flights in the first nine months, which will also be significantly higher because of all the flights we did for others. On destinations, we have more than 100 destinations now it rises between summer and winter, but always more than 100 destinations and more than 120 routes from our four bases, well five now because we have a temporary base in Gran Canaria and our fleet, reached 46 only Airbus



A220-300 by the end. We announced at the Dubai Airshow another 30 + 20 orders, which took us to the largest A220-300 operator in the world. That was a big announcement for us from a small country. This was because we would have our 50th aircraft coming already this year, and then we would have no more aircraft to come in the future as we have a very successful business model. It was natural that we would, going forward, order more aircraft, and as we focus only on the A220-300 as the only aircraft we want to operate, with that limiting, of course, our business model to the range of this aircraft. We decided to order

another 30 + 20 purchase, enabling us to grow to 100 aircraft by 2029. So that's the current plan.

We had other highlights last year, of course, impacted still by the war between Russia and Ukraine as being at the border of Belarus and Russia, and we need to circumnavigate already now since the war broke out all the areas, which makes flying significantly longer to everything we fly southeast. We have our own, airBaltic-operated flights to and from Istanbul and they are in codeshare with Turkish Airlines. We have a long history in Türkiye, a long history of passenger transport, and a long history in Istanbul because we had it in 2005 and reopened it now, but we fly a lot of charters. It's a very popular destination. So that is something new here. On the passenger side, last year, we had thousands of passengers on the Istanbul route, where the majority

of the passengers sit in Turkish. They have a higher frequency than us, but we are happy with the route because the coach gives us the point of traffic. Most importantly, Istanbul is now one of the key hubs where you can transfer. It's very popular among passengers who use Istanbul as a transfer hub, so it is a must-have destination today if you are a European carrier. We have that destination, and we are very happy with it.

The war still impacts us, and then another big highlight last year was when we started wet-lease out operations with our A220-300, and this wet-lease out is not done as a white-label aircraft. We have the airBaltic aircraft flying; for example, we had an aircraft in Zurich flying Swiss, Lufthansa group member, and it is our crew in their uniform. It is our aircraft; we just do the on-board services as the Swiss

would do it, and our crews are a maximum of one week in operation for the partner airline, which means they are trained to do our service, and seamlessly they can do the other service as well, and that helps us. We established ourselves as a premium wet-lease provider because we have a business class cabinet in the front of the aircraft, a full-service business class cabin to European standards, and an ultra-low-cost cabin in the back. That's why when we fly for SAS and Lufthansa group for their premium brand, we have the ability to do that to a very high satisfaction because we get feedback from the wet-lease partners that we serve. We are doing this at a very high level. We keep this business because the aircraft is a 150-seater, which is perfect for a lot of areas because they normally don't have aircraft of this size. Either they have smaller ones or



Ayşe Akalın - Editor in Chief of Aviation Turkey Magazine & Martin Gauss - CEO of airBaltic

their standard equipment is larger, and therefore, we operate with a unique aircraft type in a market that is significantly growing. If we look at our order book, we see that the biggest part of that market is secured because we have 150 seaters in our fleet.

On top of that, if you normally do a wet-lease operation today, then you get an 18-year-old 737 or a 20-year-old A320 flying for you, which comes with significantly higher fuel and emission costs. And suppose you fly with an airBaltic as a wet-lease. In that case, you get the most modern aircraft with a 30% reduction in fuel and emissions, which means the cost of operating it for the partner is also significantly cheaper comparing it to another 150 seater, which today would be a A319ceo. Because the A319ceo, or 737-300, would be equivalent, and I don't think there are any 737-300s around anymore, or even a 700 would not be as fuel efficient.

So that second arm was the very profitable one for airBaltic last year. Overall, as far as we know it, it has been a record year and will be a record year for airBaltic, so we know detailed numbers will be available after the audit, but we know it was a record year for us in our history, 28 years. We are now focusing on a potential listing of the company at the stock exchange, which is

maybe then, historically, the biggest thing we have done as it comes with growth. But it also comes with new shareholders and equity where people say, OK, we like that business model and continue to invest

Aviation Turkey: How did airBaltic manage to achieve its positive results in 2023, despite the problems experienced with the PW1500G engines and the negative impacts of the Russia-Ukraine War?

Martin GAUSS: So, on the war impact, in 2022, we did a calculation of how much money we lost because of the war breaking out, and at that time, it was just a direct impact of €72 Million to our revenues, so very significant as we had at that time 10% of our revenues coming from Russia and Ukraine. We had the aircraft. We were flying Odesa, Kyiv, and Lviv in Ukraine, and in Russia, we were serving high frequency to San Petersburg, Moscow, Sochi, and Kaliningrad. This all stopped but did not prevented the growth of taking on aircraft. Then, we opened more destinations to the west, which was difficult to start in 2022. But it worked very well in 2023, and we gave aircraft to others and started the wet-lease operation. So, not completely, but it offset the impact. We haven't reached the passenger numbers we had in 2019 because of the missing passengers from the east, on top of the



direct missing passengers with all the transfers we used to carry from Riga to these eastern destinations. We also couldn't fly to Yerevan and Baku in 2022, but all of that came back in 2023, helping us because these are connecting routes from Riga. So, if you come from Scandinavia or you're coming from southwest Europe, then sometimes we have the best connectivity to these places geographically, and therefore, they are back. Most of them are back.

The engine issue actually got worse last year compared to the year before. We were missing more engines in the peak

summer than expected and had to ground up to 14 aircraft. We stopped leasing aircraft ourselves while giving our aircraft to others. Because the short-term needs of not having sufficient engines back then can only be offset with a short-term wet-lease. People ask me in public why I am flying my new aircraft in Lufthansa Group, and then I'm bringing these old aircraft to fly in airBaltic. We had a lot of complaints from the passengers because of that. Until October, when the winter schedule came, we got a lot more engines. We came to a point where we only have three aircraft on the ground compared to 14 last year in the summer,



but we are already going into the summer knowing that the engine situation will worsen again. We know that because of additional problems on the PW engines, which over the next two years will have to be modified, that affects not only the A220 but also the A320 family even more. However, it is part of our business plan, and last year, we had to offset this with a costly wet-lease operation. That is disturbing profitability. Without that, we would have had much better results.

This engine issue will be fixed one day, just like any aircraft that has issues. These engineering issues

will be fixed one day. Then you can imagine if you would have even better results in these times and how good the results will be in the future. Therefore, we are very positive and able to explain to investors that, 'Look, we are already performing at a very good level with these issues. Can you imagine how good we would be if these issues were solved?' That helps us to sell our model. Because the model is unique in Europe, and it works very well for us. So yes, it was tough last year but still a record year, and I'm very proud, honestly, to have steered the airline out of Covid and out of the war to make it now the largest

A220-300 operator in the world with high recognition. If we look at the operating margins, we are ranked in the world as one of the top 20 airlines. So, somehow, we did a lot of things right, and I hope we can build on that success in 2024 and then take the airline to a proper capitalization because our negative equity is still there. It can't be fixed by our current shareholder because, according to EU rules, that would be state aid. Therefore, we will have to go through private capitalization with an IPO and, with that, finally fix the equity issue.

Aviation Turkey: While answering our first question, you underlined that you currently have 46 aircraft in your fleet, and you will get the remaining four by the end of this year. What can you tell us about airBaltic's targeted fleet structure and number of destinations for the end of 2024?

Martin GAUSS: We will fly more than 50 aircraft because we are already trying to bring outsourced aircraft. It is not finalized, but that is to bridge the gap until our new order comes, so we have an RFP (Request for Proposal) out there for leasing companies, and we expect more than 50 aircraft already this year. Usable aircraft will be less because of engine issues, so we will also seek wet-leasing capacity from others for the peak summer so that we

can fulfill our business plan. The destinations will grow. The final numbers, I can say, are only at the end of the year because we normally announce new seasonal destinations. Not all of them have been published yet, but we will be well above 100, and it will be more than it was in the year 2023. We have not announced anything other than our three Baltic bases, Vilnius, Tallinn, and Riga which is a hub. We will continue Tampere, and Gran Canaria was a winter base that will finish in April. That is as a temporary base. Otherwise, we have also contracted out aircraft to fly wet-lease for others here in the Lufthansa Group as last year. With this, we are set up to go, and now, the first week of the year, it is about getting the organizations. I think every organization is warming up for the beginning of the year, and very soon, we will see the traditional increase in booking performance in European airlines around February and March, which will give a good base for the summer to come.

Aviation Turkey: When will the first delivery of your second order of 30 aircraft take place?

Martin GAUSS: The first one is at the end of 2026. Q4 for 2026, and then they will come pretty fast. So, we are getting aircraft, and now, assuming that we agree with the lease source, we will have a continuous stream of aircraft coming in.



Aviation Turkey: So, you will lease aircraft from other sources to close that gap?

Martin GAUSS: Yes, but usually, what we do with the aircraft we purchase is we lease it back like the standard today in the world. However, we will also do a lease source with new A220 aircraft orders coming from them. For the public, there is no difference, right? It's an airBaltic aircraft, leased normally for 12 years. Whether it is a lease back or a direct lease from us, it's the same; the total number of aircraft targets is 100 by 2030.

Aviation Turkey: You have been at the helm of the Latvian flag carrier airBaltic for 12 years, and during this period, you have made several impactful decisions that led the airline to become a profitable company. One of those impactful decisions was for the airline to become a single-fleet operator

by placing an order for the then-Bombardier CSeries CS300 (now A220) to replace Boeing 737 and Q400 aircraft in the fleet. What can you tell us about the consequences of your decision to become a single-fleet operator? Are you satisfied with this decision and Airbus A220, and will you continue this practice in the coming period? In one of your preview interviews, you underlined that there is a requirement for 100 aircraft in your fleet. So, do you plan to procure more A220 aircraft or other types of aircraft in the future?

Martin GAUSS: I'm happy with the decision of A220-300 because it gave us the chance to demonstrate the cost space that we have today, and it would not have been possible if we had taken a larger aircraft. I mean, of course, there is peak summer. We could have up to 10 aircraft, which

are larger and could fill them in the peak summer, but we would not be able to fly the profitable all year round because of the model we fly. While our main competitor, is flying larger aircraft. One of the reasons why we can compete so well against them is having the right size aircraft. Therefore, the decision to purchase a 150-seater aircraft was very good. The A220-300 is now proven to be a very efficient aircraft. If we look at engine issues, something that is present in all new aircraft to a certain extent, Even if we look at the 737 Max, after they had all the aircraft grounded, the problem was that they had no issues on engines because the aircraft wasn't flying. So they could build engines and engines. Now, while the aircraft is flying more and more, the new engine technology needs to be modified. So, all new aircraft have a similar situation. Also, from that perspective, the A220 was

the right decision because the alternative would have been the 737 Max, which nobody would buy or hardly anybody buys, or the A319, which also is not sold. So, I think we made the right decision here because no alternative is being sold.

Aviation Turkey: Do you plan to procure the Airbus A321XLR or a stretched version of the A220, such as the A220-500?

Martin GAUSS: We said we are interested in if Airbus develops a stretched version because that could help us fly the same type with more seats. But there is no commitment, and there is no clear timeline. On the A321XLR, that discussion comes up again and again because of direct access to the US, mainly New York, which is missing from the Baltic states. There is no direct flight from the Baltic States to the US, and we see from the numbers today that we could operate that route with the right aircraft. The problem is that the A321XLR, as it stands today, would not be unrestricted and able to fly that route. So, we are still in a situation where there is no aircraft type that is good for that route, and therefore, the discussion always comes up on the A321XLR. Even the Riga, New York, is a little bit too long for that aircraft to be flying with the configuration we would need. So, the only alternative would be a wide body, which does not



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make sense because the businesses wouldn't work. That's why the discussion is there. So, if you ask me now, is there any plan to change the fleet? No, we continue flying the aircraft the way we do today. But of course, we've seen in the last years so many changes from the outside nearly every year, a major change, starting with, first, the financial crisis, then Covid, then the war. Now we have even two wars in Gaza and in Ukraine. So, we don't know what the future holds, and therefore, we need to be able to adjust, which means we have a very clear plan. We have an order book to continue what we do today, but we also showed that we could adjust in a very fast time. Therefore, I would say when the need

arises for a different aircraft type, then that would be a need coming from outside, something we don't know today.

Aviation Turkey: airBaltic commenced its round-trip flights connecting iGA Istanbul Airport and Riga International Airport on Sunday, April 2, 2023. You mentioned that Istanbul is one of the key hubs and a must-see destination for you. Do you plan to open new destinations in Türkiye in 2024?

Martin GAUSS: We cannot do that because of the bilateral restrictions. The countries would have to agree on opening new destinations, such as Latvia based on the Riga. There wouldn't be an interest, I assume, from Turkish

Airlines (THY) or another Turkish airline to operate to another destination in Latvia, and therefore, we are restricted to Istanbul as a destination. Apart from flying charters, of course, which we do to different destinations. There is no option for us due to bilateral restrictions.

Aviation Turkey: airBaltic first launched flights between Riga and Istanbul in March 2005, initially on a four times weekly basis using a Boeing 737-500. Could you give us a projection of your experience in Türkiye, Istanbul, since 2005?

Martin GAUSS: The load factor was not yet the lowest factor you have for an established route. It has been 70-75%. This route will have to be profitable for us; otherwise, we will have to stop it. But if you look at the development of Istanbul Airport and the

connectivity there, I have no doubt until geopolitical issues put a break to it. I use the airport myself a lot. It is a perfect gateway similar to Dubai and Qatar, and with the positive development of Turkish Airlines there, we will have more and more connectivity for passengers. As we fly in codeshare with Turkish Airlines, I think the product on the Riga-Istanbul route is very good, and that should enable all carriers on that route to grow their passenger. So, that's our expectation, and of course, I hope that the year 2024 is the second year, we will also benefit from the growth on that route. But the first year, as we started in April, was not yet at the load factor which we expected. However, that's normal because it is a new route, and there is competition while at the same time a coacher partner, which means that they are also trying to sell the tickets, which is normal. And you can of course buy a ticket for Turkish Airlines



or airBaltic. Also, Turkish Airlines, operating on the route for a longer time, has a better market share, and probably because they fly more frequently, they will continue. They also have more seats.

Aviation Turkey: Can you elaborate on your short- and long-term objectives and vision for Türkiye?

Martin GAUSS: Actually, there is no further vision possible because we can only increase frequencies as the route performs better. However, we cannot take another destination into consideration. But I think the perspective of Istanbul as a strong hub to the east for us, that is, not us flying but the Turkish Airlines flying as our partner, is something we want to develop further. That means the discussions with Turkish Airlines on putting the code on having passengers transferring in Istanbul is a discussion. We want it to happen with that route. On the other hand, we see the demand for the charter traffic to Türkiye depending on the charter operators. Of course, we continue on a seasonal basis. This is mainly for Antalya and Izmir, which we do as charter operators. But Turkey is a growing nation. It's a large country, and of course, we are serving it. We connect Latvia to Türkiye very well. We are a small country connecting to a very large country and it works very well.



Aviation Turkey: How do you see Türkiye's position in your company's future business projection? What are your expectations from Türkiye and Turkish passengers to meet your plans and expectations?

Martin GAUSS: We expect Turkish passengers to book us and fly with us. I hope that they like our product, that they like our price structure, and they like the Baltics. So, come to the Baltics. Because we not only bring people to Istanbul but also carry the people coming to the Baltic states. I think a lot of people don't know the Baltic states and their beautiful nature, and I hope that tourism here will also benefit from it as we have that connectivity. Also, we're talking about cargo, which we carry in our bellies. Whenever an airline flies a route, it normally develops the countries' economies, even if they are

small. So, in our business plan. We have that route as a profitable route going long term, and it was a prosperous development for both countries. We see the traffic developing. We saw what happens if airlines don't fly during Covid. I think airlines are there to connect people and countries, and I hope we can continue this in as many places as possible. Looking forward to peace in the countries which we don't connect today so that also there you can connect again. At the end of the day, our industry is to connect people and places, and that's what we want to do. We're not doing any politics.

Aviation Turkey: Can you elaborate on airBaltic's efforts and projects that focused on safe and sustainable aerospace? How would you summarize airBaltic's ongoing sustainability projects?

Martin GAUSS: Of course, by flying one of the youngest fleets in Europe and one of the most modern fleets on emissions, we have taken a big step ahead of many others who still need to change their fleet. But we don't stop there. We increase the usage of sustainable aviation fuel where it is available year by year. The problem is that it is not available, for example, at Riga Airport yet, but we are also looking at diversity in very different ways. We have changed our car fleet, completely technician cars, ground operations, and even management cars; they're all fully electric. So, we no longer have combustion cars. We are trying to do waste management in a different way. We got an award from IATA for diversity and inclusion two years ago, being number one in the world by having a 50% male and female

workforce at airBaltic, including the management. So, we are taking lots of steps to promote diversity and sustainability. The long-term future needs to be a new technology. So, our aircraft technology, plus using SAF fuel, is one step toward zero-emission flying. We will need different technologies for aircraft engines, whether electric, hydrogen, or something else. We don't know today.

As we are always at the forefront of technology in airBaltic, we are also trying to commit to new technologies at a very early stage and engage ourselves in the development of new technologies. We are not necessarily buying them in the experimental phase, but we would definitely want to be there at the very beginning to benefit from any of these developments later, similar to the A220-300 development. As a technology-driven organization, we are very keen on this because our target is clear. The public pressure on airlines to show sustainable behavior is very big, and we want we want to do our part. Looking at our sustainability efforts, we've made a big step with the fleet, which is the biggest one. We are still using a lot of emissions, of course, as we are an airline, but I think we are leading in this process. If we look at all the



things we have done and with that, if you're leading in an area, you can only get better. So, I hope that in the next 10-15 years, we will find the right technology so that aircraft no longer burn fossil fuels. Engine manufacturers have to come up with something that powers aircraft without fossil fuels.

The 'Green Deal' of the EU, of course, also forces us to use 2% by 2025, but for a couple of years, we have already been using it. So, depending on the destination, you are already forced to do so. For example, if you fly to Oslo in Norway, you have to use SAF. So, airBaltic is increasing its Sustainable Aviation Fuel every year. We also offer passengers an extra €2.99 to compensate and buy SAF, which means we use

that money exclusively to buy Sustainable Aviation Fuel as an option. Unfortunately, all these compensation schemes that you offer to passengers don't really work, and that's what all airlines say. Passengers are not clicking on the bottom to say, 'OK, I want to pay extra because I'm going to save the planet.' This is nothing we see yet. Maybe it's changing in the future. But today, when it comes to booking a ticket, you have the option to click and pay extra for SAF, and even the younger generation, which says, 'OK, this is something we want to have,' doesn't choose it. So, not today, but maybe tomorrow. It's natural; it's in our biology. We are humans, and nobody goes into a shop and says oh, this costs

only €7.99, let's pay €10. Therefore, we need to fix it with technology, not by asking somebody to pay extra for a ticket than they would have to pay.

Aviation Turkey: Thank you very much. Would you like to add anything in the way of a message for our readers?

Martin GAUSS: I believe we have a round interview. I'm very happy, and I hope your readers like it. It was a pleasure talking to you.

• **Editor's Note:** In a press conference held in Riga on March 5, 2024 Latvian carrier airBaltic has announced impressive performance figures for 2023, confirming that the Riga-based carrier continues to go from strength to strength. According to disclosed official figures in 2023 airBaltic recorded the highest profit in its 29-year history. The company reported profits of €34 Million (US\$37.4 million) for the year. Additionally, the airline concluded 2023 with the historically highest revenue of €668 Million (\$734.8 Million), which represents an increase of 34% compared to 2022. In 2023, airBaltic performed a total of 65,500 flights (represents 30% increase compared to 2022) and the number of passengers carried by the airline soared by 36% to 4.5 million passengers. The airline forecasts more for 2024 ➡

AVIAREPS will Represent Croatia Airlines in Turkey

Croatia Airlines started Istanbul- Split Flights. During the event organised by AVIAREPS Turkey, Croatia Airlines officials and senior officials from the Croatian Consulate General in Istanbul informed guests about Istanbul-Split flights.

Istanbul Airport - Split flights, which started on 7 May 2024, will be reciprocal three days a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Dr Ivana Zerec, Consul General of Croatia in Istanbul, and Slaven Zabo, Commercial Director of Croatia Airlines, were present at the launch ceremony held in Istanbul.

Return flight tickets for flights on the Split-Istanbul route will be available starting from 179 euros.

In the summer season of this year, Croatia Airlines will connect Split Airport with 21 international destinations or 22 airports (Amsterdam, Athens, Vienna, Berlin, Bucharest, Dublin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Istanbul, Copenhagen, London Gatwick, London Heathrow, Lyon, Milan, Munich, Munich, Oslo, Paris, Prague, Rome, Skopje, Stockholm and Zurich).

AVIAREPS, the world's leading international representation, marketing

and communications company for aviation, tourism, hospitality and food & beverage brands, has been appointed as Croatia Airlines' General Sales Agent (GSA) in Turkey. With the appointment, which will take effect in May 2024, AVIAREPS has become responsible for the airline's sales, marketing and public relations activities.

The partnership between Croatia Airlines and AVIAREPS Turkey will be an example of how airlines can expand their international footprint and performance by using AVIAREPS' international network of offices and sales and marketing experts specialising in the promotion of aviation and tourism services.

Croatia Airlines is the flag carrier airline of Croatia and a member of the Star Alliance. Based in Zagreb



and operating regular and charter flights, this well-established airline has been connecting Croatian cities to major European cities and providing passenger transport services for thirty-five years since its establishment. Attaching great importance to passenger satisfaction and trust, the company always aims to invest in the improvement and development of service

quality.

Martijn Strijker, AVIAREPS Vice President Northwest Europe and Turkey, said: "AVIAREPS is very excited and honoured to represent Croatia Airlines in the Turkish market. This co-operation will allow us to have an even more effective presence in the aviation sector in Turkey by combining the strengths of both companies. It is a great responsibility and honour for us to represent such a well-established airline as Croatia Airlines. Our commitment to customer satisfaction and service quality is one of the key elements that will ensure the success of this partnership. With our experience and know-how in the Turkish aviation and travel market, we will work with determination to strengthen Croatia Airlines' presence in Turkey."



Croatia Airlines Commercial Director, Mr. Slaven Zabo & Aviation Turkey Şebnem Akalın



Exclusive Interview with Qatar Airways Türkiye General Manager Evren Ökmen

Aviation Turkey: Mr. Ökmen, thank you taking the time to speak with us. Would you mind sharing some insights about your background and experience in the field of aviation?

Evren Ökmen: My main career focus has always been the travel industry. Working in many different areas of the business helped me to have a broad understanding of this vast network. My journey began when I started working as a licensed professional tour guide during my university years. Following my graduation, I worked for several travel agencies. Then in 1999, my aviation career started when I joined TAL Aviation (the GSA company of American Airlines, Qantas and Jet Airways) as a Sales Executive. After 3 years of service there, I moved to Emirates which I worked

as a Sales Executive for 8 years. My next post in the aviation sector was with Flydubai as the GSA Manager for Turkey for 2 years. In 2018, I joined Qatar Airways taking the position of Sales Manager – Turkey and in since 2021 I've been leading the office as Country Manager - Turkey.

Aviation Turkey: How many flights per day does Qatar Airways operate directly to Istanbul's 2 airports, and what type aircraft are used for these routes? Additionally, what cabin options are available for passengers on these specific aircraft types?

Evren Ökmen: Qatar Airways is proud to have been flying between Doha and Istanbul for the past 20 years. We currently operate 35 weekly flights between Doha and Istanbul, with 18 per week to Sabiha Gökçen

International Airport and 17 to Istanbul Airport. These flights take place on a mix of Airbus 320 and 350 and Boeing 777 and 787 aircraft.

Aviation Turkey: Besides Istanbul, your airline offers direct flights to Doha from various cities across Türkiye, making it a favored choice among Turkish travelers heading to Far Eastern destinations. Could you inform us about the current cities with direct flights to Doha and any plans to expand your network by adding new cities in-the-near-future?

Evren Ökmen: We also currently fly five times a week to Ankara and in summer, we plan to operate flights to Adana (3x weekly), Antalya (5x weekly), Bodrum (3x weekly) and Trabzon (3x weekly). All routes are currently bookable via qatarairways.com



by Şebnem Akalın

Aviation Turkey: What are the upcoming plans for Qatar Airways' fleet expansion, considering its reputation for maintaining one of the youngest fleets among airlines? Additionally, could you share insights into the new destinations that might be introduced with the arrival of the pending aircraft orders?

Evren Ökmen: We recently revealed our latest 2024 network expansion plans, which include the launch of flights between Doha and Hamburg for the first time starting in July. Qatar Airways will also resume flights to Venice in June, while there will be frequency increases on

popular European routes, including Malaga, Nice, Prague, Sarajevo, Sofia, Warsaw and Zagreb.

For Turkish travelers looking to head East, Qatar Airways has also added additional flights to Bangkok, Colombo and Kuala Lumpur starting in April.

In terms of the Qatar Airways fleet, we currently have more than 250 aircraft, including Cargo, and as of December we have firm orders for 146 passenger aircraft.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Over the past decade, you've consistently received the prestigious Best Business Class Award. What exclusive services and privileges can passengers expect when flying Business Class with your airline?

Evren Ökmen: Qatar Airways' award-winning Qsuite is about more than just the extremely comfortable, fully lie-flat bed, although this is also a major selling point! For our Business Class passengers, the world-class journey begins from the moment they set foot in the airport, with a dedicated, speedy check-in, refreshments, lounge access and priority boarding. Once on-board, the Qsuite offers spacious and elegantly designed private suites with exceptional service and restaurant-quality, on-demand dining. Ambient lighting provides a calming atmosphere to help passengers adjust to



different time zones and the extra space and privacy – along with a 'do not disturb' feature – is ideal for both work and relaxation. Passengers also receive luxury amenity kits from Diptyque and The White Company pyjamas.

Our Business Class passengers are provided exclusive treatment upon arriving at Hamad International Airport in Doha. The Al Mourjan Business Lounge makes transiting through DOH an unparalleled customer travel experience, and has been thoughtfully designed in a resort-like setting, with an incredible water feature and greenery, making it easy to forget you're in an airport. The lounge offers the World's Best Business Class Lounge Dining (awarded by Skytrax 2023) with international delicacies and an à la carte restaurant, conference rooms and private workstations, single

and double "quiet rooms" with recliner chairs and private family areas with entertainment rooms, a children's nursery and a dedicated games room.

Last year, Qatar Airways also opened its new 'Business Lounge, overlooking the tropical gardens and water features of the airport's impressive 'The Orchard'. The lounge creates an immersive experience in a serene atmosphere, with quiet rooms and scenic relaxation areas, a fitness studio, spa facilities and a children's nursery.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: In today's context, sustainability stands as a critical concern, and numerous airlines exhibit their commitment to environmental awareness through their choice of fuel and engagement in recycling initiatives. Could you elaborate on Qatar Airways' investments and initiatives

pertaining to environmental sustainability?

Evren Ökmen: Qatar Airways remains absolutely committed to protecting the environment as much as we are committed to the passenger experience. As a oneworld member airline, we are dedicated to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Qatar Airways continues to operate one of the youngest fleets in the sky, which allows us to control carbon emissions and noise pollution.

The airline is also committed to supporting the industry's development of sustainable aviation fuels. We're working diligently with all industry stakeholders to establish a viable pathway for the adoption of SAFs and we've set an ambitious target of 10% SAF usage by 2030 🌱

Saudi Low-Cost Airline flyadeal Upgrades Seats with Acro

Saudi Arabia's leading low-cost airline flyadeal has revealed the latest phase of its strong relationship with Acro Aircraft Seating with the announcement of an upgraded seat programme.

Since April 2021, Acro Aircraft Seating has successfully delivered 22 shipsets of its Series 6 seat to flyadeal for its Airbus A320neo aircraft, with a further 2 shipsets on schedule for delivery this month.

Just in time for Aircraft Interiors Expo 2024 (AIX) taking place in Hamburg this week, flyadeal has confirmed an upgrade to Acro's technologically advanced Series 9, with an immediate order for the upcoming A320neo deliveries in 2024 through to 2026.

The Series 9 for flyadeal delivers substantial weight advantage and sustainability benefits without compromising on comfort or aesthetics. It offers even greater benefits, with svelte lines giving a standout contemporary style and clever design creating a sense of spaciousness around this supremely elegant and light weight seat.

Announcing the expanding contract and upgrade to Series 9, Acro CEO, Neil

Cairns, said: "It is great that we are announcing this fantastic news with flyadeal at the world's leading marketplace for airlines and the interiors supply chain, reaffirming our position as a key player and leading innovator in our industry.

"Designed to meet the rigorous demands of today's increasingly value-driven airlines, our Economy Class champion, the Series 9, is acclaimed for its combination of light weight, unparalleled living space, easy maintenance and robust performance – characteristics which made it the perfect go-to product for flyadeal.

"In service with the airline, the Series 6 has already delivered on all fronts, inspiring flyadeal to invest still further in Acro products, upgrading to our reimagined Series 9 for the next phase of the airline's growth. We are thrilled at this vote of confidence and look forward to working closely with flyadeal to create, with them, a bespoke version of this stunning seat which will reflect both the brand and corporate values of the company. In partnership with flyadeal, we want to reach higher and do more."

The Series 9 for flyadeal delivers substantial



weight advantage and sustainability benefits without compromising on comfort or aesthetics. In fact, the Series 9 offers even greater benefits, with svelte lines giving standout contemporary style and clever design creating a sense of spaciousness around this supremely elegant and light weight seat.

Looking forward to the new look, Steve Greenway, flyadeal Chief Executive Officer, said: "The undoubted success of the Series 6 encouraged us to establish a deeper relationship with Acro Aircraft Seating and we are delighted to confirm this next phase of our ongoing

relationship. For us, it is important that our partners should really understand our brand values and that they grasp, with us, the opportunity to continuously improve our offering to passengers.

"The upgrade to Series 9 from Acro is one such move, and we look forward to seeing the new seat design take to the air. Our striking livery will, I know, showcase the Series 9 to an impactful advantage, which goes much further than appearance. The key is a higher specification, lighter, and more robust seating which our customers will find even more comfortable."



With a Goal of 10 Million Passengers, Turkish Airlines Holds 'Connect to Türkiye' Event

Aiming to bring 10 million passengers to Türkiye, Turkish Airlines, the airline that flies to more countries than any other, has recently held the latest 'Connect to Türkiye' event in Istanbul, hosting hundreds of agents from around the world.

'Connect to Türkiye' events have been rolled out in line with the goal of 10 million passengers for Turkish tourism, promoting Türkiye's cultural and historical heritage, and Turkish Airlines' growth strategies. The flag carrier organized multiple 'Connect to Türkiye' events; in America and the Far East in 2022 and 2023. The latest edition of the event took place in Istanbul between May 13-16, 2024.

The event in Istanbul hosted leading names in the international aviation industry and agents from many parts of the world,

guests also had the opportunity to discover Turkish Airlines' technology and innovation-focused approach more closely and learn about future projects of the airline.

Commenting on the success of Turkish tourism at 'Connect to Türkiye' event, Minister of Culture and Tourism Mr. Mehmet Nuri Ersoy said: "The global tourism sector has left behind quite challenging periods. Thanks to the strategies we have developed, Türkiye has been one of the fastest

to overcome these difficult times and has entered the golden age in tourism. In the first quarter of 2024, we hosted 9 million 68 thousand tourists in our country, with an increase of 17% compared to the same period last year. This is a tremendous success, which is a result of our efforts to establish year-round tourism strategy, increase product diversity, practices aimed at quality tourism, and effective communication strategies. Our flag carrier Turkish Airlines is undoubtedly a major contributor to this success story. Today, Turkish Airlines plays a significant role in hosting guests from all over

the world thanks to the comfort and service quality it provides and its presence in hundreds of different destinations also supports our promotion strategy."

Commenting on the event Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and Executive Committee Prof. Ahmet Bolat stated: "The goal of 10 million passengers within the scope of the 'Connect to Türkiye' events is an important milestone for our brand's growth and development strategies. Highlighting our commitment to this goal with these events and beyond, we will continue to offer our guests a wider range of services and increase our competitive edge globally."

Through the efforts carried out with the goal of 10 million passengers, the global brand continues its vision of strengthening the Turkish aviation industry's leading position in the international arena and providing its guests with unique services.





TAV Technologies Grows in the South American Market

TAV Technologies, one of Turkey's leading technology companies, started to provide services at five airports in Santiago, Chile and Panama. The global operation network of the company, which specialises in aviation IT solutions, has exceeded 20 countries and reached more than 50 airports.

TAV Technologies, the subsidiary of TAV Airports specialising in airport IT solutions, is expanding its portfolio in the South American market.

TAV Technologies started to provide services at Santiago, the capital airport of Chile, and Tocumen, Pacifico, Enrique Adolfo Jimenez, Scarlett Martinez and Enrique Malek airports in Panama.

The signing ceremony organised in Chile was attended by Nicolas Claude, Chief Executive Officer of Nuevo Pudahuel,

the operator of Santiago Airport, and Franck Mereyde, Managing Director and Senior Management Committee Chairman of TAV Airports.

Kerem Öztürk, Chief Executive Officer of TAV Technologies, said: "The products and services we have developed entirely with our own resources are preferred by airport operators around the world. We support the digitalisation journey of airports with our experience. The solutions we

develop focus on operational efficiency and passenger satisfaction. We are pleased to add airports in Chile and Panama to our portfolio."

Nicolas Claude, Chief Executive Officer of Santiago Nuevo Pudahuel, said: "With this agreement, we are introducing new technologies to improve our operations and provide better service to our airlines and passengers."

A certified R&D centre of the Ministry of Industry and Technology, TAV Technologies has more than 40 software developed with its own resources.

The company will commission resource

management, instant data sharing, airport operation database, slot coordination software for traffic management and integrated accounting application at Santiago Airport in Chile. Operation information systems, joint decision-making application and passenger data processing systems will also be used at airports in Panama.

Arturo Benitez Airport, the gateway of Santiago, the capital of Chile, served 23 million passengers last year. Tocumen Airport, which serves the capital Panama City, is the busiest centre in Central America and hosted 18 million passengers last year.



Experience Abu Dhabi Stopover

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, and the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) have announced the launch of Abu Dhabi Stopover. The announcement was made at the Arabian Travel Market following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between DCT Abu Dhabi's Director General for Tourism, His Excellency Saleh Mohamed Al Geziry, and Etihad's CEO Antonoaldo Neves.

The Abu Dhabi Stopover, exclusive to Etihad Airways, invites guests flying through Abu Dhabi to turn their free stopover hotel stay into the ultimate holiday. The capital of the UAE is an exciting and convenient stopover destination, thanks to its world-class hotels, stunning beaches, vibrant dining scene and full-throttle entertainment.

When booking flights with Etihad, guests now have the option to add a stopover and select a complimentary hotel as part of the online booking process. Guests can choose a free stay for one or two nights in a range of premier hotels across the city. Stopover packages are only available when booking direct on etihad.com.

H.E. Saleh Mohamed Al Geziry, Director General for Tourism, DCT Abu Dhabi, said:



“Our partners are an integral part of our mission to share the very best of Abu Dhabi with global travellers. Our Stopover programme with Etihad offers an exciting introduction to the emirate for curious visitors. This innovative initiative provides a snapshot of the diverse experiences available here — from entertainment and culture to leisure and beyond — inspiring travellers to return and immerse themselves in the complete Abu Dhabi experience.”

Antonoaldo Neves, Chief Executive Officer, Etihad, said: “We plan to bring more than 100,000 visitors to Abu Dhabi through the Stopover programme over the next year, and we're confident that once they have a taste of what the capital has to offer, they will return for more. We are thrilled to be working hand in hand with the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi to showcase what the

emirate has to offer to the world.”

The UAE capital boasts diverse landscapes, from the serene dunes offering desert safari adventures or tranquil escapism, to the soft-sand, turtle-nesting beaches of Saadiyat Island, where visitors can enjoy turquoise waters and take in a majestic sunrise or linger for the last rays of light as the sun sets.

Travellers seeking culture will not be disappointed with the city's breathtaking architectural highlights including the iconic Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Louvre Abu Dhabi with its unique landmark dome designed by Jean Nouvel, and the Qasr Al Watan presidential palace.

Those looking for adventure and family fun should head directly to Yas Island, where theme parks such as Ferrari World YAS Island Abu Dhabi offer adrenaline-fuelled rides. Kids will love meeting their favourite characters

at Warner Bros. World™ Abu Dhabi and Yas Waterworld. Yas Island Abu Dhabi offers rides, slides, wave pools and a lazy river to enjoy in the UAE's sun-filled days.

Yas Island is also home to Yas Marina Circuit, host of the famous Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, and the racetrack is open to visitors for walking, running and cycling, as well as go-karting most of the year.

Etihad's boarding pass also doubles up as the Abu Dhabi pass which offers discounts at many of the city's leading attractions as well as dining experiences.

Etihad connects more than 70 worldwide destinations through its home at the newly opened state-of-the-art Zayed International Airport. Located at the edge of the city, the airport makes it easy and convenient to enjoy a short stopover, then seamlessly connect onwards.



flydubai Records Sustained Growth in Passenger Numbers

Dubai-based flydubai records sustained growth in passenger numbers since the beginning of the year, carrying almost five million passengers between 01 January and 28 April 2024; a 13% increase compared to the same period last year.

Since the start of 2024, flydubai has further expanded its network with the start of operations to Al Jouf, Langkawi, Mombasa, Penang and The Red Sea. The carrier has also announced the further expansion of its network in Europe with the launch of flights to Basel, Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius. With the start of its seasonal summer operations between June and October, the carrier's network spans more than 125 destinations in 58 countries.

Ghaith Al Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer at flydubai, said: "flydubai continues to consistently grow its network and I am pleased to see our operations grow further in South-East Asia with the addition of Malaysia as well as the ongoing expansion in the African and European markets in particular. The added capacity has seen more passengers travel with us since the beginning of this year even though this growth has been dampened by the ongoing delays in aircraft deliveries. We are still on track for one of the busiest summers on record with the start of the seasonal summer schedule from June. Our focus for the coming few months is the

ambitious retrofit project across the fleet which will ensure an elevated and more consistent onboard experience for our customers."

Two new aircraft joined the flydubai fleet since the start of 2024, growing its fleet to 86 Boeing 737 aircraft serving its expanding network with six more aircraft expected to be delivered by the end of the year amid ongoing challenges in supply chain and delays in its aircraft delivery schedule.

flydubai's fleet consists of 29 Next-Generation Boeing 737-800, 54 Boeing 737 MAX 8 and 03 Boeing 737 MAX 9 aircraft. The carrier has launched a retrofit project that will see a complete upgrade

of the cabin interior for the majority of its Next-Generation Boeing fleet.

The multi-million dollar retrofit project was launched in January 2024 and eight aircraft have had a full cabin refresh with the installation of the carrier's flagship lie-flat Business Class seats and the new economy seats from RECARO that mirror the cabin product on its newer aircraft in the fleet. All the retrofitted aircraft will be equipped with Inflight Entertainment and will ensure a more cohesive and consistent travel experience for passengers across the fleet. The airline will retain an all-economy configuration on some of its aircraft and will upgrade the seats to the new RECARO economy



Strong performance and growing network

flydubai carries almost five million passengers between 01 January and 28 April 2024; a 13% increase compared to the same period last year. The growth was supported by additional capacity across its network.

flydubai has built an expanding network of more than 125 destinations in 58 countries, more than 90 of these routes did not have

direct air links to Dubai or were not served by a UAE national carrier from Dubai.

flydubai continues to add capacity across its markets with the frequency across its GCC market back to pre-pandemic levels.

- Colombo frequency increased to 28 flights per week this year compared to 21 per week last year

- Doha frequency increased to 42 flights per week compared to 21 per week last year

- Krakow frequency

increased to 10 flights per week from a daily service last year

- Milan service has increased from a five-weekly service to a daily service and will see this frequency double during the peak summer period

- Salalah frequency will increase to 14 flights per week compared to a daily service for the peak summer period

- Beirut frequency will increase to 21 flights per week compared to a double daily service per week for the peak summer period

seats with Inflight Entertainment.

As part of its investment in enhancing its onboard experience, the airline will also increase the seat pitch on its recliner Business Class seat product on some of its newer aircraft from 45 to 53 inches. This project will be rolled out after the summer and is predominantly designed to offer a more comfortable travel experience on shorter to medium-haul flights around the region.

The target is to complete the retrofit programme before the end of the year and the ambitious project is being carried out by both flydubai's inhouse maintenance team and GMR Aerotech MRO.





Jet2.com

Serving Dalaman Airport for 15 years

Jet2.com, which currently flies to Dalaman, Antalya, Bodrum and Izmir, will significantly increase its services to Dalaman this summer. There will be weekly flights to Dalaman from 11 UK airports (Belfast International, Birmingham, Bristol, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds Bradford, Liverpool John Lennon, London Stansted, Manchester and Newcastle International).

During the peak periods of the summer season, 88 flights per week will be operated to Dalaman, enabling holidaymakers to travel to this beautiful region more easily and frequently. With these increased services, Jet2.com aims to offer its customers the opportunity to discover the beauties of Turkey and maximise their holiday

experience.

Steve Heapy, CEO of Jet2.com and Jet2holidays, said: "It's now 15 years since we started flying to Turkey, when we only had one flight to Dalaman. We now operate a popular flight and holiday programme from the UK to four destinations in Turkey - Dalaman, Antalya, Bodrum and Izmir - and have taken millions of customers to these fantastic destinations. This growth and success over the last 15 years would not have been possible without the fantastic partnerships we have in Turkey and for that I would like to say a big thank you to the airports, hoteliers, tourism boards and all our partners. As we continue to grow and take more customers to Turkey with our flights, our partnership approach will remain at the heart of

everything we do and we remain wholeheartedly committed to bringing more happy holidaymakers to the region."

YDA Dalaman Airport CEO Yiğit Laçın said: "I am delighted to congratulate Jet2.com on the 15th anniversary of their launch of flights to Dalaman. Situated on Turkey's stunning turquoise coast, Dalaman Airport has long been a hub for travellers in search of sun, sea and relaxation. Jet2.com has been an integral part of our airport's growth story over the past 15 years and has played a key role in connecting the UK market to the stunning itinerary of our Dalaman Region. Their commitment to providing a first class service and dedication to customer satisfaction has contributed greatly to the

success of our partnership. Together, we have worked tirelessly to enhance the travel experience for the millions of passengers who choose Dalaman as their holiday destination. This summer will mark a significant achievement as Jet2.com launches its largest ever schedule to Dalaman, with up to 88 weekly flights during peak periods.

I would like to thank the entire Jet2.com team for their endless support and co-operation over the years. Our partnership is defined by mutual respect, transparency and a shared vision for excellence in air travel. I am confident that our co-operation will continue to flourish and enable even more visitors to discover the beauty and hospitality that Dalaman and Turkey have to offer."

Embraer Delivers 1800th E-Jet

Embraer has reached a new delivery milestone on the world's preferred small narrowbody aircraft program; the delivery of the 1800th E-Jet production aircraft. The new Azorra owned E190-E2 was handed over to Royal Jordanian Airlines at Embraer's facility in São José dos Campos, Brazil on 6th May.

delivery is the third E2 for the airline which currently also operates four first generation E-Jets. RJ will receive a total of eight E2s under the existing deal.

E-Jets have enjoyed global success in the fleets of 90 airlines and leasing companies from more than 60 countries since the first aircraft entered service in 2004. The E190-E2 is part of a family of advanced-generation E-Jets that offer the quietest, lowest polluting, and most fuel-efficient aircraft in the under 150 seat market. In 20 years of service, the E-Jets

have carried two billion passengers on 26 million flights a distance of 140 million kilometres with 90 airlines from 60 countries.

Samer Majali, Vice Chairman and CEO of Royal Jordanian Airlines, said, "We are delighted to participate in the milestone celebrations for Embraer and the E-jet program, recognizing the longstanding collaboration between Royal Jordanian and Embraer, supported by our valued partners at Azorra. The E2 family of aircraft supports our strategic aims and seamlessly integrates with our vision for regional connectivity and growth. This represents a pivotal role in our fleet modernization efforts, offering unmatched efficiency, flexibility, and

passenger satisfaction. Together with Embraer and our esteemed partners at Azorra, we look forward to delivering exceptional passengers experience, while contributing to a more sustainable aviation industry."

John Evans, CEO and founder of Azorra, said, "For Azorra to be part of this milestone is a true honor and we thank Embraer and our friends at Royal Jordanian for their ongoing partnership. With our E2 orderbook and growing number of airline customers, we continue to see a bright future for these aircraft and the compelling efficiency, superior passenger experience and clear economic advantages they provide."

Arjan Meijer, President and CEO of Embraer Commercial Aviation, attributed the longevity of the E-Jets program to Embraer's focus on excellence and continuous improvement, saying, "it's great to mark this milestone along with two key partners, RJ and Azorra." Meijer continued, "we're always looking for ways to make our aircraft better – reducing operating costs, extending maintenance intervals, and adding new technology. Later this year we will announce a number of performance improvements for the E2, which has also proven it is ready to fly on 100% SAF. The E2 continues to demonstrate its advantages in fuel burn, emissions, quietness, reliability, and passenger comfort, and airlines are taking notice."



Amadeus Partners with British Airways on a Journey Towards Enhanced Retailing Capabilities

British Airways has selected Amadeus as its technology partner and Amadeus Nevio, a new portfolio of modular solutions built on open and AI technology, to deliver the airline's Offer and Order strategic goals.

The partnership will see British Airways and Amadeus collaborate on the design of Nevio's Offer and Order capabilities, designed to meet the needs of modern airline retailers. Nevio's Offer suite will facilitate more dynamic products and bundles, whilst Dynamic Offer Pricing is being rolled out to enable real-time contextual pricing options based on marketplace dynamics. A suite of Digital Experience tools will underpin a user-friendly booking experience and streamline servicing, including disruption, on any device or channel.

Working together these will produce highly relevant, personalised customer offers, and deliver a best-in-class retailing and servicing experience for customers.

Built around IATA Offer and Order principles, this totally new, open, modular platform benefits from the



latest advances in AI and will help the carrier build demand, differentiate itself in the market and drive value across its entire business at speed.

Maher Koubaa, Executive Vice President Travel Unit and Managing Director EMEA, Amadeus, said: "We see Amadeus' partnership with British Airways as truly transformative. We've been working closely with British Airways for more than 20 years and we're delighted that the airline has once again agreed to be a driver customer to shape the future of the aviation industry. The milestone partnership unveiled today is a significant step in our journey to making modern

retailing a reality, with the deployment of rich, dynamic, personalized offers and next-generation order management."

Colm Lacy, British Airways' Chief Commercial Officer, said: "At British Airways we are on a journey to become a world leader in airline retailing and transform our digital customer experience, all underpinned by our £7bn investment to transform our airline.

Alongside our partners at Amadeus, British Airways will be able to collaborate on the design of the latest technology to enhance our business processes with greater agility, and help us anticipate the needs of

modern, digital travelers, providing them with exceptional experiences across their journey."

Amadeus' partnership with British Airways showcases a commitment to support an ambition on the 2 / 2 part of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to create a wholly Offer and Order based retailing environment by 2030. The open platform technology being developed by Amadeus enables the airline to be innovative in its approach to retailing and revenue opportunities and is designed to grow with the airline's business ambitions.

ACI World Appoints Justin Erbacci as New Director General and CEO

ACI World announced the appointment of Justin Erbacci as its new Director General and CEO, slated to join the organization in September 2024.

Erbacci brings a wealth of experience to ACI World, having previously served as the Chief Executive Officer of NEOM Airports and of Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA). At LAWA, before assuming the CEO position from 2020 to 2023, he served as Chief Operating Officer, Chief Innovation and Commercial Strategy Officer, and Chief Innovation and Technology Officer, demonstrating his versatility and commitment to innovation within the aviation industry. His career also includes notable roles at Star Alliance, Credit Suisse, United Airlines, Reese McMahon LLC, Cambridge Management Consultants, and Deloitte Touche. With a proven track record of leadership and strategic vision, he is well-equipped to lead ACI World into its next phase of growth and development.

In his new role, Erbacci will be responsible for representing the organization on the global stage, implementing policies formulated by the General Assembly and World Governing Board, and driving membership growth—working closely with ACI Regions and stakeholders to advance the organization's mission.

"It is an honour and a privilege to be selected by fellow airport executives to serve and represent them as Director General and CEO of ACI World," said Justin Erbacci. "I am very excited to get started and look forward to working closely with the ACI World team, the ACI Regions, and our members—both airports and World Business Partners—to address the challenges and opportunities facing the aviation industry, to further strengthen the role of airports as drivers of economic growth and development and to help transform the travel experience."

ACI World Chair Candace McGraw, also CEO of Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, welcomed the appointment, stating, "Justin brings a unique blend of proven leadership, global aviation experience, and strategic vision to ACI World. After an extensive global search, the Board and I are very pleased to welcome Justin to ACI World in his new role. We are confident that under his guidance, ACI World will continue to successfully serve as the leading advocate for the global airport community."

Erbacci succeeds Luis Felipe de Oliveira, who served from 2020–2024 as Director General and CEO of ACI World. De Oliveira's tenure at ACI World has been marked by significant strides in enhancing global airport standards and



fostering collaboration within the aviation community. Under his leadership, ACI World has prioritized key sustainability initiatives and milestones, advocated for regulatory frameworks that support airport development, and facilitated knowledge sharing among member airports.

ACI World Director General and CEO Luis Felipe de Oliveira said "After four challenging yet fruitful years at ACI, I am delighted to pass the baton to our new Director General and CEO to continue the improvement and leadership of this fantastic organization. I am confident in Justin's ability to lead ACI World to great heights. His international experience and knowledge of the entire aviation sector will definitely help ACI continue to champion the global airport community, while fostering innovation and collaboration to shape the future of the sector. I will personally engage in the transition to ensure Justin's seamless integration in Montreal and assist him in navigating our complex yet dynamic ecosystem that transcends borders, propelling our collective journey towards a brighter future in the skies."

Passenger Demand Up 13.8% in March

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released data for March 2024 global passenger demand with the following highlights:

- **Total demand**, measured in revenue passenger kilometers (RPKs), was up 13.8% compared to March 2023. Total capacity, measured in available seat kilometers (ASK), was up 12.3% year-on-year. The March load factor was 82.0% (+1.0ppt compared to March 2023).
- **International demand** rose 18.9% compared to March 2023; capacity was up 18.8% year-on-year and the load factor improved to 81.6% (+0.1ppt on March 2023).
- **Domestic demand** rose 6.6% compared to March 2023; capacity was up 3.4% year-on-year and the load factor was 82.6% (+2.5ppt compared to March 2023).

“Demand for travel is strong. And there is every indication that this should continue into the peak Northern Summer travel season. It is critical that we have the capacity to meet this demand and ensure a hassle-free travel experience for passengers. That means making urgent progress to resolve supply chain issues and for airports

Air passenger market in detail - March 2024

March 2024 (% year-on-year)	World share ¹	RPK	ASK	PLF (%-pt)	PLF (level)
Total Market	100%	13.8%	12.3%	10%	82.0%
Africa	21%	10.0%	12.3%	-15%	72.1%
Asia Pacific	31.7%	24.2%	17.9%	4.3%	83.5%
Europe	27.1%	10.6%	10.2%	0.3%	80.9%
Latin America	5.5%	10.9%	8.8%	15%	83.1%
Middle East	9.4%	10.5%	13.6%	-21%	77.5%
North America	24.2%	6.3%	7.6%	-1.0%	83.7%

1% of industry RPKs in 2023

and air traffic management to be fully staffed and operating at maximum efficiency. While airlines are prepared for customer care and assistance when operational issues arise, they are fed-up of bearing the cost when delays and cancellations are the result of poor preparation in other parts of the value chain,” said Willie Walsh, IATA’s Director General.

Regional Breakdown - International Passenger Markets

All regions showed strong growth for international passenger markets in March 2024 compared to March 2023. Load factor performance was patchy, falling year-on-year in three

of the six regions.

Asia-Pacific airlines continue to lead with way, with a 38.5% year-on-year increase in demand. Capacity increased 37.4% year-on-year and the load factor rose to 85.6% (+0.7ppt compared to March 2023), the highest among all regions. Major routes from Asia-Pacific display outstanding

Air passenger market in detail - March 2024

March 2024 (% year-on-year)	World share ¹	RPK	ASK	PLF (%-pt)	PLF (level)
Domestic	39.9%	6.6%	3.4%	2.5%	82.6%
Dom. Australia	0.8%	1.8%	3.9%	-1.7%	79.8%
Dom. Brazil	1.2%	1.6%	-0.1%	1.3%	79.9%
Dom. China P.R.	11.2%	17.6%	5.3%	8.5%	80.7%
Dom. India	1.8%	3.8%	3.5%	0.2%	85.8%
Dom. Japan	1.1%	3.3%	-1.7%	4.0%	82.5%
Dom. US	15.4%	2.6%	4.5%	-1.5%	82.9%

1% of industry RPKs in 2023

Note: the six domestic passenger markets for which broken-down data are available account for approximately 31.4% of global total RPKs and 78.8% of total domestic RPKs

growth, although the number of scheduled air services from China to North America is still only 16.5% of pre-pandemic levels.

European carriers saw an 11.6% year-on-year increase in demand. Capacity increased 11.4% year-on-year, and the load factor was 79.9% (up just 0.1ppt compared to March 2023).

Middle Eastern airlines saw a 10.8% year-on-year increase in demand. Capacity increased 13.9% year-on-year and the load factor fell -2.1ppt to 77.5% compared to March 2023.

North American carriers saw a 14.5% year-on-year increase in demand. Capacity increased 14.8% year-on-year, and the load factor fell to 84.7% (-0.2ppt compared to March 2023).

Latin American airlines saw a 19.7% year-on-year increase in demand. Capacity climbed 18.3% year-on-year. The load factor rose to 84.3% (+0.9ppt compared to March 2023).

African airlines saw an 8.1% year-on-year increase in demand. Capacity was up 11.0% year-on-year. The load factor fell to 70.3% (-1.9ppt compared to March 2023).

Domestic markets

Domestic demand increased at a slower pace in March, moderating to typical pre-pandemic growth rates. China (+17.6% compared to March 2023) continued to be the leading market. Other markets showed stable growth with the exception of Australia. Its drop in growth may reflect the wider economic slowdown in Q1 in the country.

IATA Initiative to Accelerate Transition to Enhanced GSE

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) launched a program reinforcing the industry's aim of increasing the use of enhanced ground support equipment (Enhanced GSE). Presented at IATA's Ground Handling Conference (IGHC), the IATA Enhanced GSE Recognition Program aims to accelerate the introduction of Enhanced GSE technologies into daily operations, by recognizing those ground handlers who are leading this modernization of their vehicle fleets. The first ground handlers to obtain this recognition at various stations are HACTL and Menzies Aviation.

The program is the latest action to facilitate the transition to Enhanced GSE. It follows the publication in late 2022 of the IATA Ground Damage Report: The Case for Enhanced Ground Support Equipment which identified safety and sustainability benefits that could be gained from this transition.

Enhanced GSE uses anti-collision and inching technology, which improves vehicle control, and increases docking accuracy. Additionally, most Enhanced GSE is electrically powered, thereby delivering sustainability gains over most non-Enhanced GSE.

"The Enhanced GSE Recognition Program is another pillar of IATA's efforts to reduce ground damage by transitioning to Enhanced GSE fleets. The transition has been slow, despite well-documented gains in safety, cost-reduction and sustainability. By recognizing those companies leading the evolution, we aim to accelerate this critical industry transition," said Monika Mejstrikova, IATA's Director of Ground Operations.

Ground Handling Service Providers (GHSPs) participating in the program will have the opportunity for their fleets to be assessed. Those achieving a ratio of Enhanced GSE to non-Enhanced GSE that exceeds a predetermined threshold will receive a recognition stamp valid for two years. Participation in the program will be voluntary and free of charge, as part of IATA's commitment to achieving industry-wide safety improvements without imposing financial burdens on GHSPs.

IATA estimates that the annual cost of ground damage could reach \$10 billion by 2035 unless preventive action is taken. However, transitioning 75% of the global fleet of belt-loaders, cargo-loaders, passenger stairs and passenger boarding bridges to Enhanced GSE, would reduce the current expected ground damage cost per turn rate by 42%.

The IATA Airport Handling Manual (AHM) already advises on the design and use of Enhanced GSE as a best practice. The program will serve as an add-on to the IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO), which will include the integration of Enhanced GSE into operations as of 2025.

The program will be deployed in several phases, initially focusing on assessing the three types of GSE most associated with ground damage incidents: belt loaders, ULD loaders, and passenger stairs. Over time, it will expand to include lifting and elevating GSE that docks at aircraft doors and GSE that couples to aircraft.



Saudia Group Orders 105 A320neo Family Aircraft

Saudia Group, represented by Saudia, the national flag carrier of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and flyadeal, the group's low-cost carrier, has signed a firm order for an additional 105 A320neo Family aircraft. The order comprises 12 A320neo and 93 A321neo aircraft. This increases Saudia Group's Airbus aircraft order backlog to 144 A320neo family aircraft.

The agreement was announced at the Future Aviation Forum in Riyadh in the presence of H.E. Saleh bin Nasser AlJasser, Minister of Transport and Logistic Services of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Engr. Ibrahim Al-Omar, Director General of Saudia Group and Benoît de Saint-Exupéry, Executive Vice President Sales of the Commercial Aircraft business.

H.E. Engr. Ibrahim Al-Omar, Director General of Saudia Group, said: "Saudia has ambitious operational objectives to meet growing demand. We are increasing flights and seat capacity across our existing 100+ destinations on four continents, with plans for further expansion. The progress of Saudi Vision 2030 is attracting more visits, tourists, entrepreneurs, and pilgrims each year. This motivated our decision to secure this significant deal, which will create jobs, increase local content, and contribute to the national economy."

"The new additions of the A320neo family aircraft will play a vital role in contributing to Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030 plan," said Benoît de Saint-Exupéry, Executive Vice President Sales of the Commercial

Aircraft business. "It will enable Saudia Group's strategy to advance the Kingdom's aviation capabilities while enabling both airlines to benefit from the A320neo Family's exceptional efficiency, superior economics, highest level of passenger comfort as well as lower fuel-burn and emissions."

Saudi Arabia is creating unprecedented opportunities for global aviation through the Saudi National Tourism Strategy, which targets more than 150 million tourists by 2030. This order with Airbus will play a significant role in strengthening the Kingdom's ambition of becoming one of the top global tourism destinations.

The A320 Family is the world's most popular

single aisle aircraft having won over 18,000 orders from over 300 customers in all markets. The A321neo is the largest member of Airbus' A320neo Family, offering unparalleled range and performance. By incorporating new generation engines and Sharklets, the A321neo brings a 50% noise reduction and at least 20% fuel savings and CO2 reduction compared to previous generation single-aisle aircraft, while maximizing passenger comfort in the widest single-aisle cabin in the sky. As with all Airbus aircraft, the entire A320 Family is already able to operate with up to 50% Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). Airbus aims for all its aircraft to be capable of operating with up to 100% SAF by 2030.

Air Marakanda Announces the Appointment of New CEO

Air Marakanda, which manages Samarkand International Airport (SKD), has named Ulugbek Shamsikulov as its new Chief Executive Officer. He replaces Anton Khojayan, who is moving to a new position in a state project.

Says Mr Shamsikulov: "Under his excellent leadership, Anton has made a significant contribution to the development and modernisation of SKD, including the construction of our stunning new state-of-the-art terminal facility. We wish him every success moving forward.

"I look forward to continuing the strategic vision to maintain the growth of our airport's route network and improvement in the quality of service enjoyed by passengers."

Mr Shamsikulov brings three decades of aviation industry experience, after beginning his professional career as an engineer in Samarkand Airport's Department of Development and Foreign Economic Relations. Having been promoted through a number of key posts, in 2012 he became a director of the airport, before departing in 2017. He returned a year later to the airport's emergency services and



more recently has led the airport's airside ground operations.

The first major airport project in Uzbekistan to be built in a public-private partnership, Samarkand's international terminal opened in early 2022, and doubled passenger numbers in each of its first two years. One million passengers used the airport for the first time in 2023.

SKD has already enjoyed continuing growth at the start of 2024, with 294,000 passengers using the ultra-modern airport terminal in the first three months of the calendar year, an increase of 39% on the same period of 2023. This helped SKD to report 55% growth in passenger numbers during the autumn-winter period (AWP) season, with 491,000 passengers using the terminal between 29 October 2023 and 30 March 2024.



British Airways' New Route 2024

British Airways has announced the launch of various long- and short-haul routes from London Heathrow, London Gatwick, and Edinburgh for 2024. In addition, the national flag carrier is returning to London Stansted for the first time since the pandemic as it continues to increase the choice available to its customers globally.

The route Izmir, launches on 18 May 2024, and flights will depart weekly from London Heathrow Terminal 5 on Saturdays. Flights will be available from £146 return.

Izmir will join Istanbul, Antalya, Bodrum and Dalaman to become the fifth Turkish destination on the British Airways network.

New Route from Pegasus Airlines; Ankara-Dublin

Pegasus, Turkey's digital airline, is connecting the two capitals by launching flights between Ankara and Dublin. The first of the flights to Dublin, which will be operated 3 frequencies per week, will be operated on 3 July 2024. Tickets for Pegasus flights to Dublin, the capital of Ireland, from Ankara are now on sale starting from EUR 69.99.

Flights will be operated from Ankara Esenboğa Airport to Dublin Airport at 09:50 on Wednesdays and Sundays and at 10:00 on Fridays, and from Dublin Airport to Ankara Esenboğa Airport at 13:25 on Wednesdays and Sundays and at 13:35 on Fridays.





Emirates Begins Operating with SAF at London Heathrow Airport

Heathrow Airport. Over 3,000 metric tonnes of neat SAF, blended with conventional jet fuel, will be supplied into the fuelling infrastructure network of the airport* until the end of summer 2024.

This is the first time the airline will be using SAF to power some of its flights at London Heathrow and represents the largest volume of SAF it has purchased to date. Emirates is participating in London Heathrow's SAF Incentive Programme, which ensures its affordability and

accessibility for airlines operating at the airport.

The airline will be accounting for, tracking and tracing the delivery of SAF at London Heathrow as well as its sustainability attributes through robust reporting methodologies. The SAF that Emirates has purchased from Shell Aviation will be safely dropped into existing airport fuelling infrastructure and aircraft jet engines. In its neat form, SAF can reduce lifecycle carbon emissions by up to 80%** compared to using conventional jet fuel.

Adel Al Redha, Deputy President and Chief Operations Officer, Emirates Airline said: "Emirates is eager to take this next step in our SAF journey with Shell Aviation and London Heathrow supporting us with this fuel supply arrangement in one of our biggest operations outside of Dubai. The LHR Incentive Programme will support the SAF market's increasing momentum, allowing airlines like Emirates to take advantage of its availability and make it more commercially viable."

"London Heathrow's SAF initiative also demonstrates credible action to encourage the scale up and use of SAF by airlines, building local production capabilities grounded in real demand, in addition to developing capacities across the supply chain to blend, handle and distribute SAF more widely. We hope that the initiative receives collective support of government authorities to boost more investment in SAF production in the future. While Emirates explores opportunities to increase the use of SAF within our network, we'll

continue to take other steps to reduce our emissions, with a major focus around optimising flight operations including weight reduction of aircraft and charting more efficient flight routes, among other initiatives."

Raman Ojha, President, Shell Aviation, added: "After our successful collaboration with Emirates to supply SAF to Dubai (DXB) last year, we are pleased to continue our support for their sustainability journey by enabling the airline to decarbonise flights out of the UK. This development also marks further progress in the growth of our global SAF supply network. Our goal is to continue to work with forward-thinking players in the aviation industry, like Emirates and London Heathrow, to make SAF available in more locations around the world."

Ross Baker, Chief Commercial Officer, Heathrow said: "We are thrilled to support Emirates with Heathrow's Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) scheme. SAF is crucial to decarbonising long haul flights as it can cut the carbon on routes like London to Dubai without the need for new aircraft or infrastructure. Thanks to commitments from airlines like Emirates, we expect to support the use of up to 155,000 tonnes of SAF at Heathrow this year. Now we need to ramp up SAF production in the UK so the country can benefit from jobs, growth and energy security as more airlines make the switch to more sustainable fuels."



iGA Istanbul Airport "Airport of the Year" for The Fourth Time in 5 Years

iGA Istanbul Airport received the "Airport of the Year" award at the "Air Transport Awards 2024". In its five years of operation, the airport has received the prize four times, demonstrating its remarkable achievement.

The awards were presented at the prestigious Air Transport Awards ceremony, known as the only international event that honours all main categories of the global aviation industry.

At the ceremony held in Ekali, Greece, the "Airport of the Year" award was presented to the CEO of iGA Istanbul Airport, Selahattin Bilgen. iGA Istanbul Airport was named as "Airport of the Year" ahead of its international competitors in 2021, 2022 and 2023, and has achieved this success for the fourth consecutive time.

Organised annually by Hermes - Air Transport Organisation, ATN (Air Transport News) and ALA (America Latina Aeronoticias), the Air Transport Awards are organised by a special committee elected by leading aviation industry organisations such as Airports Council International (ACI), the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The awards, which comprise 14 aviation sectors, are presented to individuals, institutions and companies that contribute to the development of the industry. The winners are determined by a vote involving more than 4,000 Air Transport News

readers and aviation industry executives.

CEO of iGA Istanbul Airport, Selahattin Bilgen, in his speech at the ceremony, said: "We at iGA Istanbul Airport are incredibly grateful to have received this prestigious award for the fourth consecutive year. Being recognized as the Airport of the Year is a testimonial to the dedication and never-ending efforts of our entire team, who continuously strive for excellence in every facet of our airport's operations. Together, we aim to set new standards of efficiency, sustainability, innovation and passenger satisfaction. To that end, we've set even more ambitious targets for 2024, this award reaffirms our sincere commitment to providing world-class services and we are honored to be acknowledged as the best in the industry. We thank the Air Transport Awards team for this honor and intend to continue delivering the best possible service for our stakeholders and passengers."

Air Transport News Director General and CEO, Dr Kostas Iastrou, said "iGA Istanbul Airport has proven to be a resilient and innovative aviation hub despite all the challenges faced by the aviation industry since the Covid-19 pandemic. It has rapidly reached pre-pandemic figures in passenger numbers and has become a leading global hub by increasing airline diversity. This award is a reflection of the dedicated work of airport employees and the pleasant travel experience they strive to offer their guests."



Deutsche Aircraft Partners with Airplane Painter

Deutsche Aircraft has announced a strategic partnership with Airplane Painter, a painting and sealing service provider based in Toulouse, France. Airplane Painter will serve as the supplier for the stripping and repainting of the D328® fleet.

Airplane Painter has extensive experience in the aviation industry, with more than 20 years of expertise in aircraft painting. Their dedication to precision, quality and innovation aligns seamlessly with Deutsche Aircraft's commitment to excellence.

In addition, Airplane Painter also operates another company specialising in Part 145 activities, further enhancing their capabilities in the aviation sector.

"We are excited to partner with Airplane Painter as our trusted supplier," says Peter Spyrka, Vice President of Programmes at Deutsche Aircraft. "We look forward to a fruitful and collaborative partnership as we work together to elevate our fleet aesthetics and ensure the highest standards of quality and performance."

"This partnership represents a significant step forward for both Deutsche Aircraft and Airplane Painter," remarks Charly Arslan, Vice President, and Founder of Airplane Painter. "We aim to establish a long-term relationship built on mutual trust, respect and shared values."

The two companies are committed to providing operators with a comprehensive and seamless one-stop solution for the D328® fleet for aircraft maintenance and painting needs.



SIA Group Posts Record Full Year Net Profit of \$2,675 Million

- Highest full year operating and net profits in the Group's history as robust demand for air travel drives record passenger revenue and load factors
- Geopolitical tensions, macroeconomic uncertainties, inflationary pressures, and supply chain constraints pose challenges for the aviation industry
- The SIA Group's robust foundations and long-term strategic initiatives position it strongly to capture future growth opportunities
- Proposed final dividend of 38 cents per share results in a total payout of 48 cents per share for FY2023/24, or a dividend yield of 7.5%

The demand for air travel remained buoyant throughout FY2023/24, boosted by a rebound in North Asia as China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, and Taiwan fully reopened their borders. SIA and Scoot carried a combined 364 million passengers, up 37.6% year-on-year. Passenger traffic grew 26.6%, outpacing the capacity expansion of 22.9%. As a result, the Group passenger load factor (PLF) improved 2.6 percentage points to a record 88.0%. SIA and Scoot registered record PLFs of 87.1% and 91.2% respectively.

Group revenue rose \$1,238 million (+7.0% year-on-year) to a record \$19,013 million. Passenger flown revenue rose by \$2,319 million (+17.3%) to \$15,685 million, despite a 7.6% decline in passenger yields. Cargo flown revenue fell \$1,485 million (-41.2%) to \$2,119 million. While cargo loads increased by 17% due to the strong demand from the e-commerce segment, yields were 42.2% lower year-on-year – albeit 29.8% above pre-pandemic levels.

Group expenditure increased \$1,202 million (+8.0%) to \$16,285 million. Non-fuel expenditure rose by \$1,336 million (+13.5%), and was partially offset by a \$132 million decrease (-2.5%) in net fuel cost. The increase in non-fuel expenditure was lower than the 16.0% increase in overall passenger and cargo capacity. On the other hand, net fuel cost fell despite higher volumes uplifted (+\$918 million) and a lower fuel hedging gain (+\$358 million), mainly due to an 18.5% decrease in fuel prices (-\$1,281 million).

As a result, Group operating profit reached a record \$2,728 million, up \$36 million or 1.3% from a year before.

The Group's net profit improved by \$518 million (+24.0%) to \$2,675 million. This was mainly due to the better operating performance (+\$36 million), a net interest income versus net finance charges a year before (+\$215 million), lower tax expense (+\$132 million), and a share of profits versus a share of losses of associated companies from the previous year (+\$104 million).

Air Astana Reaches New Heights in Celebrating 22nd Anniversary

Air Astana launched its inaugural service between Almaty to Astana on 15th May 2002 and has gone from strength to strength over the past 22 years. During this time, Air Astana has steadily built a reputation for award winning customer service, operational efficiency, high safety standards and consistent profitability without the support of shareholders or government funding. The Air Astana Group, comprising Air Astana, a full service carrier and FlyArystan, a low cost carrier, is currently the largest airline group in Central Asia and the Caucasus by fleet size and revenue.

The outstanding achievements over more than two decades culminated in an Initial

Public Offering (IPO) of the Air Astana Group in February 2024, with successful listings on the Kazakhstan Stock Exchange, Astana International Exchange and London Stock Exchange. This major corporate milestone came in the wake of continued financial success in 2023, with the group recording net profit of US\$68.7 million on a turnover of US\$1,175 million. The group paid over US\$100 million in taxes in 2023 and almost US\$7 million invested in staff development.

"We have much to celebrate as we mark 22 years in business. I am grateful to my over 6,000 colleagues and our millions of customers for their loyalty and support," said Peter Foster, CEO of Air Astana Group.

Air Astana Group continued to grow the fleet over the past 12 months and currently operates a fleet of 51 Airbus, Boeing and Embraer aircraft. More deliveries are scheduled before the end of 2026, including the first of three widebody Boeing 787s to be deployed on new long-range services arriving in 2025.

During 2023, Air Astana and FlyArystan carried in total 8.1 million passengers, with the network expanding to over 90 international and domestic routes serving 63 destinations. Major international markets include destinations in Central Asia, China, Germany, India, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey, UAE and UK.

In September 2023, Air Astana Group officially

opened a new Flight Training Centre in Astana, which is certified by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and equipped with a full-flight simulator, together with emergency training simulators. On the engineering side, the airline successfully completed its first six-year C-Check on an Airbus aircraft.

Air Astana continues to place a high priority in delivering service excellence and was delighted to receive APEX Awards for "Best Onboard Service" and "Best Entertainment System" in the Central and South Asia region. The airline also received a Skytrax World Airline award for "Best Airline in Central Asia and the CIS" for the eleventh time since 2011.



New Air Serbia Premium Lounge at Belgrade Airport by the End of the Year

Air Serbia plans to open a new Premium Lounge at Terminal C10 at Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport by the end of 2024. The new lounge will occupy an area of 630 square meters and will be able to accommodate up to 160 guests simultaneously. This way, the existing lounge located between terminals A4 and A5 will be replaced by one twice its size, and Air Serbia will provide even higher quality service to its passengers in a very pleasant environment.

The new Premium Lounge of Air Serbia will have a rectangular base with a wall entirely made of glass along its length. This will allow lounge guests to relax or work with an attractive view of the runway of Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport, observing take-offs and landings before



their flight. The space will be dominated by fluid forms inspired by flight paths, as well as the recognizable colours and symbols of Air Serbia. The lounge will be divided into two zones, service and relaxation, while a separate area will comprise a conference room for business meetings, located in a special, VIP zone of the Premium Lounge.

"The opening of the new Premium Lounge is part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing passenger experience and providing

top-notch comfort and service. The new, exclusive space will be designed to offer maximum comfort. Lounge guests will be able to enjoy a sophisticated ambience and a rich selection of food and beverages, including freshly prepared local and international specialities, while our professional and courteous team, as always, will be available to passengers to provide personalized service and meet all their needs and requests," said Boško

Rupić, General Manager Commercial and Strategy, Air Serbia.

The existing Premium Lounge of Air Serbia at Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport was opened on 9 September 2015. It is the first and only lounge of its kind owned by an airline at the airport in the capital of Serbia. From its opening until today, the lounge has been used by more than 325 thousand guests.

The services of the Premium Lounge can be used by passengers of Air Serbia travelling in business and economy comfort classes at no extra charge, while the passengers who make reservations via the company's website or come to the Lounge can also use the premises by purchasing a ticket.

Oman Air Receives Cirium Award for Highest On-Time Performance at ATM Dubai 2024

Oman Air has accepted the Cirium award for Best On-Time Performance (OTP), for which it ranked highest in the Middle East and Africa during 2023. Capt. Nasser Al Salmi, Oman Air's Chief Operating Officer, accepted the award from Cirium Chief Executive Officer, Jeremy Bowen, during the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) Dubai, where the airline is participating in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and

Tourism and Oman Airports. Oman Air's newly appointed CEO, Con Korfiatis, also attended alongside Chief Transformation Officer Ahmed Al Amry and other members of the management team, where they met with key industry stakeholders and partners.

"Achieving the highest on-time performance rating amongst our regional peers is a true testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence and reliability

in air travel. For us, on-time performance is more than just a metric; it is a cornerstone of our guest experience. I would like to extend my appreciation to our dedicated crew, in the air and on the ground, for continuing to ensure smooth and seamless journeys for our passengers," commented Capt. Nasser Al Salmi.

"On-Time performance is competitive, especially in the Middle East and Africa region, where top performers

are usually only separated by fractions of a percentage. Oman Air however continues to deliver on its commitment to on-time performance. In 2023, it did something truly remarkable, the Most On-Time Middle East and Africa airline with an OTP rate of 92.53%. It was also the highest score recorded among all carriers across all categories in 2023. A heartfelt congratulations to everyone at Oman Air," said Jeremy Bowen.

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