

# Istanbul Airport - A Monument of Achievement that will be Passed down from Generation to Generation

by H. Kadri Samsunlu Chief Executive Officer at IGA Istanbul Airport

In April, we were excited to celebrate the first year of the full operation of Istanbul Airport. It is the gate of our country which opens to the future and is called the "Victory Monument" by many authorities. We achieved a great accomplishment by carrying out the most successful and biggest move in aviation industry with our stakeholders on April 6, 2019, for the transition to full operational capacity.

Istanbul Airport is the reflection of a profound vision, beyond being just an airport, from the initial groundbreaking to the construction phase, and to the first moment it started its operations. Istanbul has been the capital of important civilizations throughout history, the civic center of Europe, Asia and Africa, and it is a unique city not only for us but also in terms of world history. Istanbul, which has become a brand with its architectural and historical richness, and a global center of attraction in terms of culture, art and trade, is a kind of meeting point of Turkey. Istanbul Airport has the characteristics



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of a masterpiece. It was created with the vision of bringing our country's assertiveness in aviation up to the highest level, with the desire to produce a sustainable structure, part of a long-lasting ecosystem that is worthy of this valuable treasure.

We experienced many historic moments during the construction and activation of Istanbul Airport. The massive transfer operation called the "Great Move" was one of the most ambitious transfer operations in the civil aviation industry and demonstrated proof of Turkey's logistics success. This process

was conducted with the seamless transfer of 47 thousand 300 tons of equipment from Ataturk Airport to Istanbul Airport in 33 hours, just shorter than two days. As IGA, we flawlessly managed the operations from an active airport to the new one located 45 kilometers away. In this regard, the "Great Move" has secured its place in aviation history as an extremely comprehensive and well-managed operation. I would like to especially express that there are very few countries in the world that have the capacity to carry out such an operation. Our country is distinguished in

aviation history as being among those countries.

As IGA, we have made an additional payment of **EUR 22.4 million** to the state as a result of exceeding the EUR 233.1 million International Passenger Income guaranteed by the General Directorate of State Airports during the first year of Istanbul Airport, the full-capacity operation process of which was started on April 6, 2019. **During our first year, without using any state resources**, we became the center of interest for the international aviation community by placing our signature under this important achievement.

The occupancy rate of Istanbul Airport Duty Free reached 98.4% as of March 2020, spending per capita increased by 55% since the opening, and we served 445 thousand passengers in our IGA Lounge, performing above our targets during the last one year period in private passenger services. We broke a record by offering our special passenger services to a total of 1.3 million guests. **Within a period of nearly one year, between April 6, 2019 and March 31, 2020, we hosted 64 million passengers and 74 airline companies at Istanbul Airport.**

With our exclusive architecture, efficient infrastructure, superior technology and the high-level travel experience we offer, we are at a critical juncture to fulfill our promises to our country, our aviation industry, our stakeholders and our passengers. Now we are all enduring the Coronavirus pandemic which is adversely affecting both the entire world and our country. We have been exerting all efforts to take maximum precautions against the Coronavirus risk by placing thousands of hand disinfection points throughout Istanbul Airport. Disinfection activities are conducted at the terminal building and we have provided training to our personnel. We use thermal camera

controls, we disinfect the transportation vehicles, and we also utilize the red line application at counters and passport control points. I would like to emphasize that after the Coronavirus outbreak we will adapt with the world as we navigate new ways of operating to provide safety and stability with our understanding that “public health comes first” by making the appropriate changes.

Aviation is one of the industries mostly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak that first emerged in Wuhan, China in January 2020. While the pandemic rapidly changed the economy, public and our daily lives, it also changed our travel habits. This delay to the season opening of the tourism sector, domestic and international travel restrictions, cancellation of many international cultural, sports activities and many sectoral fairs affect us negatively as well as all industries.

According to the analyses, the potential impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the aviation industry is estimated to be a loss of US\$ 70 billion. **The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced that 25 million jobs dependent on aviation and related sectors would be at risk due to the coronavirus**

**outbreak.** Considering that approximately 65.5 million people earn their living from sectors related to the aviation industry such as travel and tourism, the IATA research published on April 7, 2020 also reveals that 25 million jobs are at risk in aviation and related sectors worldwide based on a scenario with severe travel restrictions lasting for three months. In addition, it is clearly seen how our sector is seriously affected by the crisis, considering that passenger revenues of airline companies are expected to drop by 44% in 2020 compared to the previous year, and that demand will decrease by 70% in the second quarter of this year. Additionally, airline companies will face a liquidity crisis with a US\$ 61 billion cash burn.

In the light of all these developments, a very difficult year is ahead of us. But we are confident that the growth of the Turkish aviation industry will continue with increasing momentum in the coming days and will overcome this crisis with solidarity. This crisis we have been going through is not just a financial crisis. It will not take much time for people to return to their old habits following the creation of an environment of trust after they have been stuck in their homes for weeks on end. In our mutual

consultations with our stakeholders, we see that everyone shares the same opinion. **The aviation industry has always been able to get out of such crises stronger, as we have seen in the past.**

I am sure that we will achieve even higher figures at Istanbul Airport in terms of the number of passengers and cargoes. There is no deviation from our target of entering the 100 M club in terms of the number of passengers. As IGA, the operator of Istanbul Airport, we constantly renew ourselves in terms of travel experience. Currently, the construction of the 3rd runway is ongoing. We plan to put this new runway into service on June 18th, 2020 which will provide substantial advantages operationally. With our spirit of enthusiasm, we look forward to welcoming our passengers once again. As a country that achieves growth in every field, realizes outstanding projects, and one that has become a major player with its investments not only within its region but also on global scale, we believe that good days will come soon.

With our aim to make Istanbul Airport a global brand, we will offer the world Turkey's world-class expertise, and we are taking firm and confident steps on our path toward this objective 🌍