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BUDAPEST

BEST EASTERN EUROPEAN AIRPORT



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BUDAPEST

BEST EASTERN EUROPEAN AIRPORT



Budapest International Airport was named 'Best Airport – Eastern Europe' at the latest Skytrax World Airport Awards ceremony. Receiving this esteemed Award is an accomplishment and testimony to ongoing developments as well as a commitment to continuously delivering best-practices in all areas. The results of the Skytrax Awards are based on the world's largest customer satisfaction survey, completed by airport passengers from over 160 countries. Evaluating airports across 39 services and product features, from arrival to departure, passengers are expected to make their own, real, honest choices. Budapest Airport's growing popularity is evident. We sat down with Jost Lammers, Chief Executive Officer to find out more about Budapest Ferenc Liszt airport's current success and its future vision.

"It was not a first-time achievement; we have already won the Award in 2014. This is in addition to many other awards we have collected from architecture awards to best marketing awards and even the best refinancing of the year! I put these achievements down to one basic factor: teamwork! We place quality, service and a can-do attitude at the forefront of all of our daily work. We include quality measures in management and

front line performance target schemes. In addition to having a great location and a recovering economy, we have been able to secure more passenger and cargo carriers than many nearby competitors. Of course our infrastructure and capacity puts us at the top of many aviation company's lists."

Last year, Jost Lammers was named "Entrepreneur of the Year" by the Hungarian National Association of Entrepreneurs

and Employers. He is a member of the Curatorium of the Corvinus University of Budapest. His previous experiences include Managing Director of Flughafen Dusseldorf Ground Handling GmbH, Senior-Asset Manager at Athens Airports. The latter background experiences may have helped to meet any international challenges in Hungary.

"It is very much the cross cultural experience and the specific airport know-how



that I was able to gather over the years at various airports and in various functions. It helped me to quickly get settled in Budapest and in my role at the airport. It was very helpful to have a wide operational knowledge from my previous positions in order to develop BUD Airport in all areas. I could do it in a stable manner from a very much operations and technical driven organization to a service oriented, customer and commercial focused one.”

Throughout his career Jost Lammers had to deal with totally different languages; Hungarian, German, Greek and of course English.

“Hungarian is a unique language and Hungarians are very proud of their identity; so are our Hungarian passengers. From a business perspective, English is the International standard and that is our formal internal business language as it transcends most borders. Of course,

Hungarian is used when we deal with authorities as local laws are governed by the Republic of Hungary. Therefore the corresponding text is in Hungarian which is why we employ two full time translators in our offices to help us assist in such matters. As for myself, I would call myself as an intermediate Hungarian speaker at best!”

The accomplishments of Budapest Airport are admirable and commendable. Spirits and expectations for 2015 are high after last year’s most successful year in history. Airports are no longer just transportation hubs. They have to become service centers. What is in the pipeline beyond 2015?

“It is important to reflect on the past to help direct the future. We have had a remarkable turnaround in the last three years, particularly culminating in record passenger numbers in 2014. So far, in 2015, we appear to be on track

to exceed our own expectations of 9.65 million and even pushing the 10 million mark. This year’s first quarter performance is already 12% ahead of 2014! Of course, rapid growth means that we must bring forward some of our master plan developments. These are subject to necessary board and permit approvals. They will include a new airside pier offering more gates than today, an extension of the landside check in and security capacity with the introduction of Terminal 2C, a real airport hotel, new and enlarged cargo facilities, car park expansions and of course other smaller demand led projects. In terms of runway and apron capacity, our present infrastructure is more than capable of handling much more aircraft movements. Although our passenger numbers are booming, we are still some 30% behind the movements we had in 2011 when Malev still existed.”

Budapest International Airport is now eight years under the leadership of Jost Lammers. Many things have developed and every year has shown positive milestones. Teambuilding and managerial freedom may be the recipe for success. “No doubt that the team spirit is one of the most important drivers for our success. We had the freedom to build up a strong international team on the executive level but also to continuously develop and recruit excellent senior and middle managers. We take pride in regularly identifying successors for key positions internally. This is extremely motivating for a team of ‘young’ leaders. I believe that the other key factors are the trust and confidence given by our shareholders and the absence of major political influence. This helped us to always focus on doing reasonable things.”

Budapest Airport is run by a consortium of private investors from Germany, Canada, and Singapore. It is unusual in Eastern Europe if an airport is not run by a public entity. In Budapest, the private involvement did contribute to the success and brought advantages to the development of the airport.

“It was even more unusual when Budapest became privatized. However, more and more airports in the region are becoming either fully privatized or a mixture of public/private partnerships. In fact most recently, FRAPORT acquired the management rights to operate. Ljubljana airport in Slovenia and other airports in Poland and Romania are also moving in to private hands. In our case, there is no doubt in my mind that being in private hands enabled us to make agile decisions. At the same time it is imperative to consult with stakeholders in the public sector.

Our obligations are also to our board of directors, airlines, passengers, suppliers and of course staff. In many emerging markets, there appears to be a growing appetite by countries in Europe to privatize none core assets. Operating an airport for example is hugely labor and cost intensive. A private international aviation company like our majority shareholder Avi Alliance has excellent international aviation expertise and it will help the airport continue to move forward.”

BUD (LHBP) has a General Aviation terminal. In recent times it has been renovated to provide a much better surrounding for its users. It has a great design, excellent catering and all the amenities needed to serve GA clients. The terminal is operated by Celibi Hungary which provides most handling services. However, other handling providers can also serve their clients’ needs at the terminal. The traffic through the terminal is prone to certain peaks around events such as the Red Bull Air

Race or the Hungarian Formula One Grand Prix. Business Aviation is vital to the airport although it represents five percent of all movements.

“This segment is very important for our future growth. The improving economy, combined with increasing foreign investment is leading to a compound growth expectation of around 5-6% each year in General Aviation which is in line with our midterm passenger traffic number forecasts. We promote the GA capabilities at every opportunity to ensure that potential clients are able to select the airport for their GA needs. My advice is to come and see for yourself how developed BUD is and what it can offer.”

One thing is very certain. Hungary’s well documented and forecasted potential is now beginning to bear fruit with exceptional tourism numbers, ever improving infrastructure and a sympathetic aviation environment.

Cdr. Bud Slabbaert 



Jost Lammers
CEO
Budapest Airport

Flight Consulting Group sets the pace for Baltic Business Aviation

The Flight Consulting Group, a Latvian holding company that specializes in business aviation services, is celebrating 15 years of being in business. During that time the Flight Consulting Group has proved itself as a reliable partner to many clients, the company continues to grow and is aiming to double in size by expanding its service portfolio.



The Flight Consulting Group started by offering international flight support, charter flight management and handling for non-scheduled flights at Riga International Airport. The company quickly became one of the leading business aviation service providers in the ex-Soviet territory.

In 2009 the Group established the first FBO (Fixed Base Operator) in the Baltic States resulting in the launch of the FBO RIGA business aviation center at Riga International Airport. By 2010 there were 20 business jets based at the airport making Riga one of the leading business aviation centers in Europe. Today the Flight Consulting Group is preparing for the launch of a new state-of-art business aviation center, FBO RIGA, at Riga International Airport. The grand opening of the new business aviation center is scheduled for September 9, 2015.

Speaking about how business aviation has developed in Latvia and the prospects for the future of the Flight Consultancy Group co-owner Roman Starkov states that there is moderate growth (1.5-2%) in the market. Leonid Gorodnitski, co-owner of the Flight Consulting Group sees this as



an opportunity to attract new clients by offering a combination of price and quality criteria which means that the company has consistently managed to exceed the overall growth rate.

Currently the Flight Consulting Group is handling about 80 percent of non-scheduled flights in the airports throughout the Baltic States, Belorussia and Kaliningrad (Russia). It is also providing dispatch services to more than 90 aircraft of different types, from the Beechcraft Premier 1 to Boeing Business Jets and Airbus Corporate Jets from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Malta, etc. The total number of flights handled and serviced by the Flight Con-

sulting Group exceeds 80,000 in 125 countries and 2500 airports across the globe.

Leonid Gorodnitski advises *“We do flight support for aircraft from all over the world, so regarding the Flight Consulting Group Ops center some of the aircraft that we support may not even be flying to Latvia. Most of our clients are from the nearest countries in a radius 1000-1500 km (Russia, CIS countries, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe).”*

The Flight Consulting Group includes FBO RIGA, a certified ground handling provider and operator of the business aviation center in Riga International Airport. Roman Starkov sees this as one of the Flight Consulting Group's most important projects. He advises that the engineering design and development department has participated in different consulting projects in CIS countries during the last 8 years. One of the key aspects of this is the creation of Flight Consulting Group's unique software for business aviation. The company's flagship IT-product - FCG ATOM (Air Trip





The Flight Consulting Group – 15 years of success!

Order Management) combines ERP, CRM, Flight Planning and Business Analytics. The software not only meets the needs of its users but also sets new standards for all market participants. The Flight Consulting Group's policy is to constantly work on the development and improvement of the software to ensure it is the most up-to-date and modern software available.

Looking ahead to the forthcoming Baltic Business Aviation Forum (BBAF) Mr Starkov is delighted that FCG will play a major part in the event. Speaking about the Forum he says "The BBAF has a great value for our region. It's a unique platform for communication between industry professionals with interesting lectures and discussions." Leonid Gorodnitski adds "Besides there is not only official part, but also common

culture and networking activities in the outstanding location of the Baltic Sea shore which unites delegates into a big, friendly team that goes beyond any international borders."

While some international delegates may be put off by the current international tension in the wider region Roman Starkov suggests that this should not deter them from coming to the Forum. Both owners agree that despite the political situation in the region, the work goes on and business continues to develop. It is hoped that the political situation will stabilize in the near future which will result in a very positive impact for the regions business aviation sector.

To summarise Mr Starkov reflects that "15 years is a period when one can safely

judge if the business has been a success. I am very proud of Flight Consulting Group's achievements. Of course, this is the result of the hard work of our team where each member is a true professional in their field of expertise. From the very first day we strived to provide integrated, high-quality and cost-effective services in business aviation with an individual approach to every customer. We will continue our progressive development and will constantly improve our services for the benefit of our clients, partners and the whole market".

Leonid Gorodnitski added "We are proud of our business results and we will put every effort to increase the scope of services on offer while continually improving the quality that we deliver."

Peter Bradfield 

Avinode's New Marketplace App Keeps Private Jet Business On The Move



Oliver King, Managing Director, Avinode, the world's leading online marketplace for buying and selling air charter, is today announcing the launch of its new Avinode Marketplace App, enabling users to stay on top of their business, and their customers' trips, whilst on the move. Later this year, additional features will be launched to allow operators to modify and respond to quote requests.

Available on iPhones, the current version of the Avinode Marketplace App allows users to search Avinode's full global database of available private jet aircraft, which includes the industry's largest database of empty legs. The app also now allows brokers to organise trip requests and responses all in one place. It keeps track of the status of all requested trips, originating from Aircraft and Helicopter Search, Empty Legs or Trip Board in the Avinode Marketplace. The app compares the options, making it easy to evaluate and compare quotes from operators and allows push notifications to see when a request is accepted.

Oliver King, Avinode's managing director, says:

"More than 80% of the European charter market already uses Avinode's Marketplace. The goal with this app, our 'pocket-sized Marketplace', is to allow brokers and operators to manage their business 24/7, servicing trips, taking care of their end client and managing quote requests whilst on the move. Our long-term goal is to put all the functions that a user needs to manage their business remotely onto the app, so they can work on any mobile device or tablet, wherever they are."

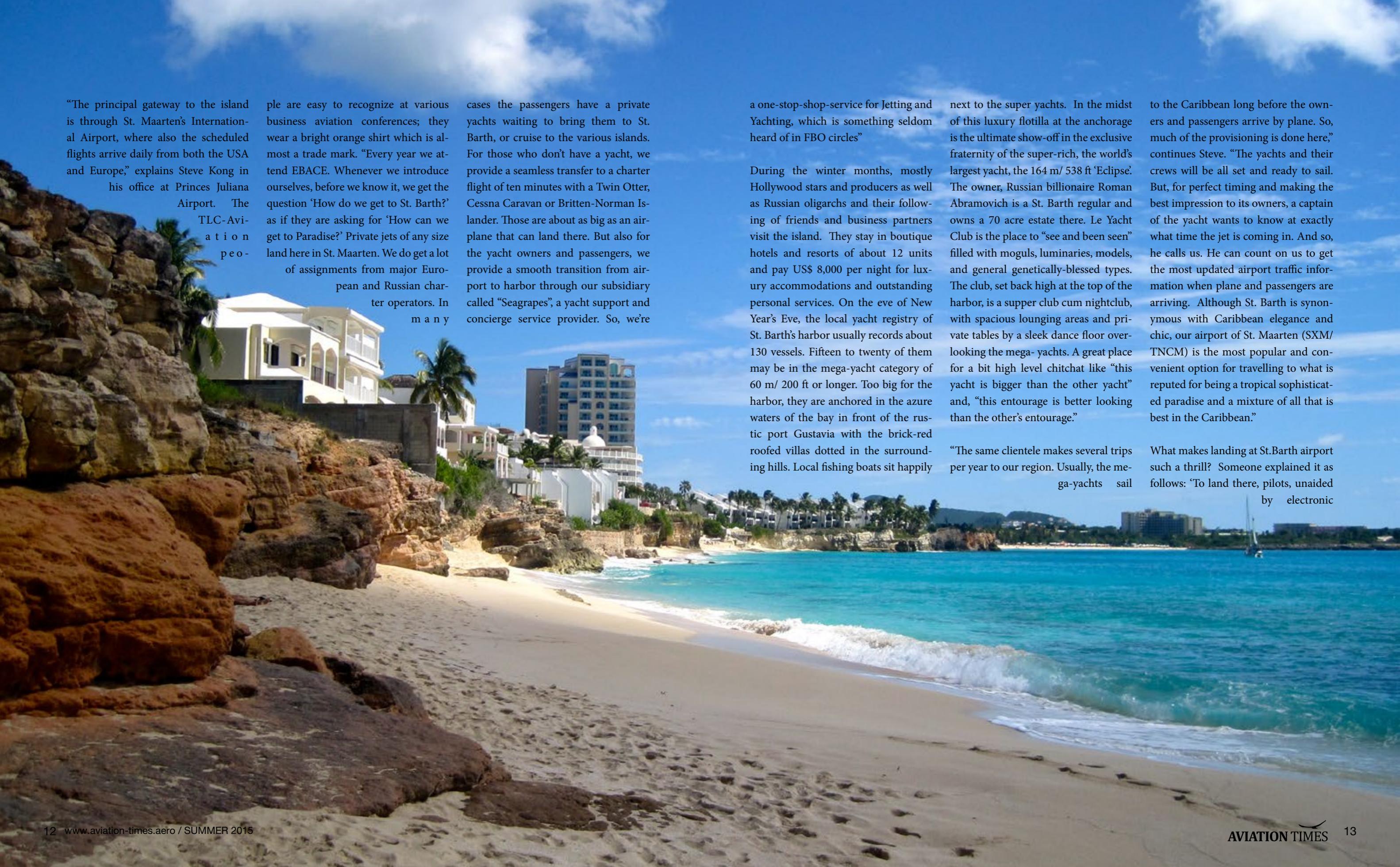
Avinode's Marketplace App has been designed to make the processes for operators and brokers as fast and efficient as possible. Once the key stages of the iPhone development have been put in place, Avinode's next priority will be to build the same product for Android. At the end of June 2015, Avinode also launched a refreshed user interface to the Avinode Marketplace so that it works across devices, from tablets to operational displays.

Avinode's Marketplace App is free to download and available from the Apple Store. 

A large green and white airplane is flying in the sky, viewed from below. The background shows a tropical beach with lounge chairs, people, and a clear blue sky with scattered clouds. The title 'How to fly to Paradise' is written in large white letters on the right side of the image.

How to fly to Paradise

While in the Caribbean, I sat down with Steven Kong, Managing Director of TLC-Aviation, the executive handling operation of choice on St. Maarten. We talked about St. Barth, the exclusive destination of the “Rich and Famous”. St. Barth’s is short for the official name ‘Territorial Collectivity of Saint-Barthélemy’. It is part of the French Republic and therefore French-speaking and French-flavored. Celebrities and luminaries have long flocked to this high-end, luxury isle for its privacy and exclusivity. Although it has a reputation of being a chic getaway, the international crowd enjoys the combination of low-key European sophistication and Caribbean laid-back lifestyle. How do private jets get there? They don’t! St. Barth does have an airport (SBH-TFFJ), but the too-short 650 m/2,133 ft runway is furthermore listed as one of the most difficult approaches in the world and not something for the faint-hearted.



“The principal gateway to the island is through St. Maarten’s International Airport, where also the scheduled flights arrive daily from both the USA and Europe,” explains Steve Kong in

his office at Princes Juliana

Airport. The

TLC-Avi-

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ple are easy to recognize at various business aviation conferences; they wear a bright orange shirt which is almost a trade mark. “Every year we attend EBACE. Whenever we introduce ourselves, before we know it, we get the question ‘How do we get to St. Barth?’ as if they are asking for ‘How can we get to Paradise?’ Private jets of any size land here in St. Maarten. We do get a lot of assignments from major European and Russian charter operators. In

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cases the passengers have a private yachts waiting to bring them to St. Barth, or cruise to the various islands. For those who don’t have a yacht, we provide a seamless transfer to a charter flight of ten minutes with a Twin Otter, Cessna Caravan or Britten-Norman Islander. Those are about as big as an airplane that can land there. But also for the yacht owners and passengers, we provide a smooth transition from airport to harbor through our subsidiary called “Seagrapes”, a yacht support and concierge service provider. So, we’re

a one-stop-shop-service for Jetting and Yachting, which is something seldom heard of in FBO circles”

During the winter months, mostly Hollywood stars and producers as well as Russian oligarchs and their following of friends and business partners visit the island. They stay in boutique hotels and resorts of about 12 units and pay US\$ 8,000 per night for luxury accommodations and outstanding personal services. On the eve of New Year’s Eve, the local yacht registry of St. Barth’s harbor usually records about 130 vessels. Fifteen to twenty of them may be in the mega-yacht category of 60 m/ 200 ft or longer. Too big for the harbor, they are anchored in the azure waters of the bay in front of the rustic port Gustavia with the brick-red roofed villas dotted in the surrounding hills. Local fishing boats sit happily

next to the super yachts. In the midst of this luxury flotilla at the anchorage is the ultimate show-off in the exclusive fraternity of the super-rich, the world’s largest yacht, the 164 m/ 538 ft ‘Eclipse’. The owner, Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich is a St. Barth regular and owns a 70 acre estate there. Le Yacht Club is the place to “see and been seen” filled with moguls, luminaries, models, and general genetically-blessed types. The club, set back high at the top of the harbor, is a supper club cum nightclub, with spacious lounging areas and private tables by a sleek dance floor overlooking the mega- yachts. A great place for a bit high level chitchat like “this yacht is bigger than the other yacht” and, “this entourage is better looking than the other’s entourage.”

“The same clientele makes several trips per year to our region. Usually, the mega-yachts sail

to the Caribbean long before the owners and passengers arrive by plane. So, much of the provisioning is done here,” continues Steve. “The yachts and their crews will be all set and ready to sail. But, for perfect timing and making the best impression to its owners, a captain of the yacht wants to know at exactly what time the jet is coming in. And so, he calls us. He can count on us to get the most updated airport traffic information when plane and passengers are arriving. Although St. Barth is synonymous with Caribbean elegance and chic, our airport of St. Maarten (SXM/ TNCM) is the most popular and convenient option for travelling to what is reputed for being a tropical sophisticated paradise and a mixture of all that is best in the Caribbean.”

What makes landing at St.Barth airport such a thrill? Someone explained it as follows: “To land there, pilots, unaided by electronic

landing guidance, must make a steep, slow glide, thread their way between a pair of wind-buffed peaks, skim 150 feet down a hill while holding a 10-foot altitude, then level, touch down and brake hard.' In other words, they have to fly through a notch between the peaks of the relatively high Mont

hill. The pilot has to work the yoke violently trying to keep level in the pretty strong winds and it creates turbulence. The small and short airstrip ends directly on the beach. All in all, it is pretty exciting. Watching the planes land from the top of the hill where four roads between the twin peaks meet in a roundabout is almost as exciting as being a passenger on the aircraft itself. The planes come in nose down, diving

directly at whatever drives or whoever walks there. It can clear it by about 10 feet before the steep descend over a hill to make the landing. St. Barth has one of those airports where a landing will make one's hair rise and gives one the goosebumps.

Cdr. Bud Slabbaert 



Satcom Direct expands activity in the Baltic and CIS regions

Satcom Direct, the leading provider of satellite voice and broadband data solutions for flight deck and cabin communications, is bolstering its activity in the Baltic and CIS regions with a strong presence at two of the areas' most important business aviation shows this season.

At the IV Baltic Business Aviation Forum, to be held in Jūrmala, Latvia on 6-7 August 2015, Satcom Direct will enjoy a high profile presence as it sponsors the event's important networking evening reception attended by leading aviation influencers and executives from the sector. Satcom Direct will maximise the opportunity to promote its GlobalVT product which allows smartphone users to use voice and SMS text functionality from their own personal smartphone number during flight at any altitude, anywhere in the world.

Supporting its expanding client base in the CIS region, Satcom Direct will also be a fourth time exhibitor at Jet-Expo, the CIS's leading annual business aviation exhibition,



to be held at Vnukovo Airport, 10-12 September. In addition to demonstrating GlobalVT, representatives at the Satcom Direct booth, C102, will showcase the benefits of its SkyStream channel bonding and aggregation service. Delegates will learn how the service provides a significant upgrade in airborne data speeds as it allows customers to combine multiple streaming channels of Inmarsat Swiftbroadband to achieve higher data rates for real-time communications applications like video conference and streaming video.

The company's exclusive Satcom Direct Router (SDR™) powers both GlobalVT, and the bonding and aggregation services along with a range of other connectivity services including flight tracking,



flight deck data links and moving map information. *“People expect their smartphones, tablets, laptops, TV and video to work on their aircraft just like they would on the ground, and Satcom Direct is committed to providing that experience,”* said Chris Moore, chief commercial officer, Satcom Direct International. *“Accessibility to GlobalVT and SkyStream real-time video streaming enables passengers to make direct calls to colleagues, friends or relatives, whilst watching their favourite sports matches, awards ceremonies or news, in real time, in the air, as they would on the ground,”* continues Moore.

Gulfstream Aerospace Corp. receives approval for line installation of SDR

Ahead of the Riga event, Satcom Direct has announced that Gulfstream Aerospace Corp. has received approval

from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for installation of its next-generation Satcom Direct Router (SDR) on Gulfstream G650, G550 and G450 aircraft. Gulfstream is pursuing similar supplemental type certificates from the FAA to add the SDR communications enhancement to GV and GIV aircraft.

“This is a wide body and long range market owing to the vast distances that need to be covered. Many of our customers fly Gulfstream models, so we anticipate they will welcome the latest approval and want to find out more about the options. Our presence at these two key events provides an excellent platform from which we can explain and demonstrate the benefits of the applications of the SDR to all our customers” concludes Moore.



Vitalij Kapitonov, CEO of KlasJet

Travellers data will private flyers love it?

The U.S. Department of Transportation has recently approved a highly criticised passenger data collection system that would allow airlines to collect and use customer information for the purpose of marketing different products and services at different prices. The European Commission has followed the path by introducing a law with regard to surveillance on all travellers' data. These steps have prompted a heated debate in the commercial aviation community on whether the collection of data will protect the general public from threats or merely provide airlines with extra profit. However, role of big data in business aviation is rarely a hot topic.

There was a time when we thought that the data we generate is of little concern to anyone but ourselves. However, as the global population now produces 1.15 trillion 2GB USB sticks of data every day, there's no surprise that more and more interested parties assign an increasing value to the information we store and share on a daily basis. Amongst those parties there are multiple commercial airlines, which are keen to capitalize on this gold rush through personalized pricing. Nonetheless, when we speak about personal data collected from business travellers, such as CEOs, entrepreneurs and other wealthy passengers, it can be up to 10 times more valuable and pricier than the information about a statistical John Doe, says Financial Times.

“With valuable personal data now within a hand's reach of almost anyone with the right tools, it is important to not overstep the thin red line which separates the desire for bigger profits and the privacy of private travellers. Capitalizing on such data would definitely boost the short-term profits of every operator, but since business aviation has very strong values linked to privacy and anonymity,

it is hard to imagine any long-term benefits in compromising these values at all,” comments Vitalij Kapitonov, the CEO of KlasJet. *“For instance, just last year hackers exposed the personal data of 750 000 frequent flyers, including those in business class, just by hacking into the Japan Airlines' database. Such thing would be unimaginable in our field of aviation. There are still ways to try and adapt the use of big data to improve the quality of private travel even more.”*

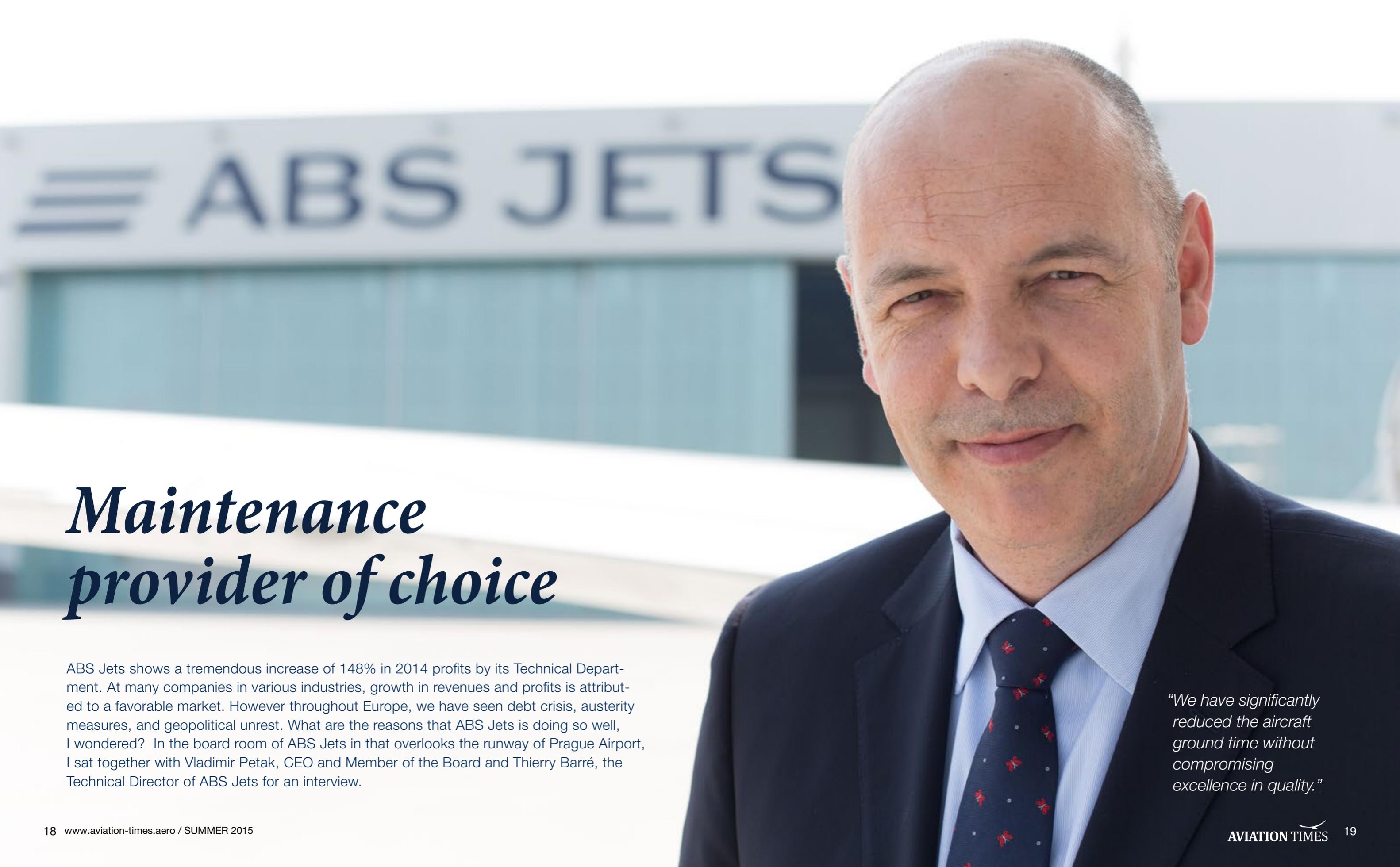
According to the executive, certain personal information would allow customizing services to meet and exceed every single client's needs, such as food preferences, cultural nuances or even religious needs. Knowing that customers worldwide are willing to pay up to 20% for any product or service that is tailored personally, according to Bain & Company survey, such customization could be equally beneficial to both, a client and an operator.

For instance, according to the recent Boeing's Billionaire Study, wealthy individuals travelling on private jets nowadays seek 'unique experiences that surprise and delight them.' Given that

the increasing number of business travellers are from the emerging markets such as the Middle East or China, tailoring your services to the cultural and religious nuances as well as other peculiarities of business travellers might be the factor which could take your client's breath away.

“Despite all the benefits it could bring to the market, big data is, in some way, still an invasion of privacy. More than a third (34%) of people worldwide think that the data they provide to airlines is accessed by someone unauthorized within a period of 12 months”, says Unisys. *“In other words, people nowadays, more than ever, believe that their data is being used unfairly. Keeping that in mind, big data in business aviation can only be used with the clients' consent and passengers should be the ones to decide which information can be entrusted and which should remain private. In that way operators with the capabilities to provide comprehensive services will have the upper hand in elevating travellers' experience to yet unseen levels.”*





Maintenance provider of choice

ABS Jets shows a tremendous increase of 148% in 2014 profits by its Technical Department. At many companies in various industries, growth in revenues and profits is attributed to a favorable market. However throughout Europe, we have seen debt crisis, austerity measures, and geopolitical unrest. What are the reasons that ABS Jets is doing so well, I wondered? In the board room of ABS Jets in that overlooks the runway of Prague Airport, I sat together with Vladimir Petak, CEO and Member of the Board and Thierry Barré, the Technical Director of ABS Jets for an interview.

“We have significantly reduced the aircraft ground time without compromising excellence in quality.”

“We are creating a culture that drives learning and continuous improvement.”

“ABS Jets has a more sustainable approach. We all know that an aircraft sitting on the ground because of maintenance doesn't generate revenue and it also lessens the overall readiness to have aircraft operational for an assignment,” Thierry Barré says, opening the discussion. “We have significantly reduced the aircraft ground time without compromising excellence in quality. It makes ABS Jets' maintenance services stand out and being the best means being less vulnerable to the impact of trends.”

ABS Jets is implementing a Lean Maintenance program according to the Japanese 'Kaizen' principles. The application of this Lean philosophy leads to increases in operational performance and the continuous improvement through the elimination of non-value-added activities on the shop floor, as

well as reducing inventory, floor space, and productivity in the back shops. The word Kaizen means “continuous improvement”. It comes from the Japanese words 改 (“kai”) which means ‘change’ or ‘to correct’ and 善 (“zen”) which means ‘good’. A common attitude in maintenance and repairs is ‘if it ain't broke, don't fix it.’ The Kaizen philosophy is to ‘improve it even if it isn't broken.’ The simple reasoning behind it is that if one doesn't improve, one cannot compete with those who do.

“We have also noticed that Kaizen is a philosophy that motivates our people to constantly improve their surroundings,” comments Vladimir Petak. “Empowering our workers contributes to greater efficiency at ABS Jets. Since they are part of the process of making suggestions and sharing their ideas, they feel appreciated

that their ideas were welcomed and thus have a strong sense of pride in the difference they make.”

The availability of effective training programs, is essential to ABS Jet's overall performance. The company makes considerable investments in continuous education and training of its employees. In the Technical Department alone, the investment in training was increased by 134% in 2014. Is there a correlation between this number and the profit increase of 148% in this department?

Thierry Barré responds: *“We are creating a culture that drives learning and continuous improvement. Our team possesses more problem-solving skills are better prepared to succeed in an increasingly competitive environment. I see my already highly skilled team looking for*

new process approaches to reach better results. It doesn't mean to be faster but rather to be more efficient and more effective. The payoff is less cost, increased quality, shortened cycles and improved customer lead times. We have turned our maintenance processes into models of streamlined efficiency”.

ABS Jets was originally known as an aircraft charter and management company. Over the years ABS Jets has expanded its departmental activities as service provider to third parties. For instance, its OCC – Operations and Control Center is now handling complete trip planning assignments for clients as far as the Americas and China and trips to very challenging destinations such as Nepal with its extremely difficult airport infrastructure.

In 2014, the ABS Jets Technical Department increased the number of technical service projects by 19% and the milestone of annual 50,000 man-hours of work has been exceeded. The significant

maintenance revenue increase suggest a growing clientele and additional assignments for a good reason: a growing list of international certifications and authorizations.

“ABS Jets is an approved certified service center for specific types of Embraer aircraft and a key player for the Embraer Legacy support in the EMEA region. We are a Honeywell Authorized Service Center,” Thierry lists. “Lately, we were authorized by Russian aviation authorities for maintenance of all Russian (RA) registered aircraft. It is an opportunity to prove that ABS Jets values the relationship with all Russian aircraft owners and operators regardless whether their planes RA registered or not. The most recent maintenance certification came for the Gulfstream G550. The technical performance of our service center as well as our important customer portfolio are recognized by these certifications.”

ABS Jets is also authorized to perform maintenance for aircraft registered in

Aruba (P4), the United Arab Emirates (A6), the Cayman Islands & Bermuda (VP), the Isle of Man (M), Ukraine (UR), Turkey (TC) and all EASA countries. ABS JETS provides dedicated daily maintenance support -Line Maintenance and AOG recovery- as well as more complex technical and repair services -Base Maintenance- for its managed aircraft and all third party customers.

Maintenance operations account for up to 18 percent of the fleet of any aircraft operator's total operating costs. There is no way around it that aircraft need to undergo scheduled maintenance. ABS Jets has proven that it is able to keep those costs low by improving the throughput in the hangar and keeping the ground time at a minimum. The company is becoming the maintenance provider of choice for a growing number of operators and aircraft owners.

Cdr. Bud Slabbaert 

Baltic Business Aviation Forum on its way to success

Based on registration and inquiries the IV Baltic Business Aviation Forum promises to become another valuable conference for all participants and a success for the organizing RUBAA (Russian United Business Aviation Association). The conference will be held on August 6 and 7 in Jurmala, Latvia. The Forum, now in its fourth year, has already proven to be an important meeting point of Russian and European business aviation companies. The meetings are characterized by an atmosphere of friendship and collegiality in the pursuit of cooperation and exploring solutions.

“We expect that many professionals and guests will be attending based on the registrations that are currently coming in,” says Anna Serejkina, RUBAA Executive Director and Member of the Board. “We are putting a lot of effort into making the event interesting and effective for everyone who is attending and we are creating an opportunity to resolve business matters and spend private time in the company of friends and partners in a compelling atmosphere.”

The conference program includes sessions on the development, trends and opportunities of Business Aviation, in particular in the Baltic Region. The conference agenda includes presentations and discussions on some of the most vital issues including aircraft finance and insurance, maintenance, economics of aircraft operation and fleet management, standards for operators and executive handling, as well infrastructure development. It will provide updates on the latest industry advances. The conference

has a line-up of highly qualified international speakers and moderators. Simultaneous Russian-English translation is provided.

The Forum will offer ample occasions for networking and socializing. One of such instances is the Evening Reception on the first conference day which is sponsored by Satcom Direct.

“No one can deny a perfectly organized business program, but an opportunity for informal communication with colleagues and partners is very important,” says Evgeny Pashkov,

Director General, Satcom Direct Rus, Ltd. *“Forums like the BBAF are important both for the industry and its participants. We gladly support the event and decided to sponsor exactly the evening reception. We have already taken part in the Baltic Forum and look forward to new meetings!”*

All Forum's delegates and guests are invited to this special evening event in a chalet right on the beach of the Riga Bay. A sightseeing tour to the city of Riga is on the recreational agenda of day two.





Traveling in love and style

“Where would you go on your honeymoon to make it very special for the one you deeply love. After all, this will be the most important day in our life?” David, a young man next to me in the coffee bar asked.



The first place that came to my mind was Amalfi in Italy, south of Naples on the Gulf on Salerno. The town lies at the mouth of a deep ravine and the foot of Monte Cerreto. It is surrounded by dramatic cliffs and coastal scenery. In the past, it was a popular destination for the 'upper-class' and aristocracy.

"How do we get there if you want a First Class experience?" David asked.

The closest airport to Amalfi is Salerno. From there it takes a gorgeous must-see coast ride with fantastic vistas. There are no flights from Prague to Salerno. One could fly to Naples via Frankfurt or Munich. It takes about six hours. There is no true first class experience and certainly no privacy for two people who are so much in love. That extraordinary day becomes stress pure. One has to be at least an hour ahead at Prague airport. If one is lucky the complete trip from door to door will take at least eight hours. The problem with airlines is that they often don't fly where you want to go, and not as fast as you want on a wedding day. You have to fly by their schedule and connections.

"There is an alternative that may make all dreams come true, a private charter flight! Contact a company like ABS Jets at Prague Airport and find out," was my suggestion. *"Tell them what your intentions and wishes are. They will offer a complete solution that probably will go beyond what you imagine for a honeymoon. They'll take care of everything; door to door."*

Some time had passed. I was sitting in the same coffee bar reading my newspaper when David came in and sat next to me. I looked at a newly-wed who proudly raised his hand to show the wedding ring.

"Everything was just fabulous," said David. *"I will tell you about our travel experience."*

They had contacted ABS Jets and told them their intentions and their requirements for when, from where to where they wished to travel.

"The ABS representative was so friendly and passionate as if it was going to be her own honeymoon," David told. *"An airline could never do that. We saved a lot of time that we now had available to enjoy ourselves in Amalfi. We had to be at the airport only fifteen minutes before the trip. Even if we would have been a little late because of the traffic on the roads around Prague, they would have waited for us. Our baggage was carried to the jet that was waiting for us alone. No standing in line for security, no waiting at the gate. We loved the personal care we received when traveling on the private charter. Imagine, at the steps of the airplane, the captain personally welcomed us aboard as if we were celebrities. Before the flight we were offered a glass of Moët Chandon Champagne. We could sit back, enjoy our privacy and we were so much in love."*

The direct charter from Prague to Salerno only took one hour and fifty minutes and at a time of day that

was most convenient to them. On a wedding day, the last thing you need is stress. The ABS Jets representative had prepared an offer with several types of aircraft, so they could choose the one that would suit them best. They were deciding between 3 aircraft – Citation Mustang for 4 people which costs 8.000,- euro, Citation Excel for 9 passengers for 11.000,- euro and elegant Embraer Legacy for 13 passengers would cost them around 20.000,- euros. On their flight, a delicious lunch was served; an appetizer, a tasty main course and a surprise little wedding cake as a dessert. Little things mean a lot in private aviation.

"I had checked airline prices on the internet. I was willing to fly First Class. I examined the kind of seating and services and considered the airport inconveniences," explained David. *"The prices were not far apart, but there are times in life that feeling good is more important than anything else. We chose private charter and did the right thing."*

Upon arrival in Salerno, the handling staff accompanied the couple to the terminal. It is a smaller airport with no airline traffic; everything went fast. ABS Jets had arranged for a limousine waiting right in front of the terminal to bring them to their Bridal Suite in the hotel in Amalfi, also reserved by ABS in Prague. *"This is living, this style, this is elegance by the mile,"* concluded a cheerful David.

Cdr. Bud Slabbaert 

BGS Lithuania Appoints Gytis Gumuliauskas as Its New CEO

BGS, an international ground handling and aircraft fuelling services provider, has announced a change in its senior management. On the 1st of June G.Gumuliauskas assumed the position of the Chief Executive Officer at the company and has already started to lead its operations in Lithuania.

The new CEO has spent his whole career in aviation and now has more than 8 years of experience in the field. G.Gumuliauskas specializes in effective process management, quality of service and aviation safety assurance, implication of safety standards and expansion of aviation business. Prior to joining BGS, G.Gumuliauskas was the CEO at Air Lituanica. The new executive will replace Linas Geguzis, the CEO of BGS Poland, who was temporarily assigned to the CEO position of BGS in Lithuania as well.

Commenting on his appointment, G.Gumuliauskas said, *“BGS is a top-level international company with an enormous potential. It is my pleasure to join such a professional and rapidly growing company. I am confident that together with the entire team, we will continue expanding the company’s presence in the Baltic States and Europe.”* *“Today BGS is not only actively work-*

ing in the ground handling segment but also rapidly expanding its share of the liquid ADR transportation and aircraft fuelling market in Europe. The company aims to grow profits in all of the service segments, so an eager CEO with aviation experience is a must”, comments Daumantas Lapinskas, Member of the Board at Avia Solutions Group, the holding company of BGS. *“G.Gumuliauskas started his career in aviation in the companies within the holding, therefore we consider this transition as a very welcomed*

comeback. As for the manager himself, I am sure it is a new and exciting challenge for him as well as a great opportunity to improve and continue working within the aviation industry.”



The First Virtual Library has Opened in Sheremetyevo

The grand opening of the first futuristic virtual library took place in July at Sheremetyevo International Airport, supported by the Russian Literary Union, the Publishing Group “Eksmo-AST” and the online shop of eBooks “LitRes”.

In a figurative literary salon in the departure lounge of Terminal D the participants of the event, passengers and visitors of the airport were able to get acquainted with the innovation, as well as to communicate with a famous writer Dmitry Glukhovskiy, the author of the bestseller *“Metro 2035”*.

“SVO Library” will help not only to spend time with pleasure while waiting for a flight, but also will arouse interest of passengers due to its nontriviality.

During the opening ceremony the Chief of the technical infrastructure of Sheremetyevo Kirill Kulikov noticed: *“To provide passengers with a quality service is a priority of Sheremetyevo. Sheremetyevo is the first airport in Russia where the virtual library was opened. This project introduces to the passengers the masterpieces of the world literature in a nontrivial format and gives them a chance to have an original leisure”*.

The leader of the team of *“the Russian Literary Union”* working on a Year of Literature Marina Abramova also said: *“This year is announced by Russian President Vladimir Putin as a Year of*



Literature, and such projects are very suitable within the framework of such a large federal project. The personal task of our organization is to come up with a format of creative development of the trend of reading. We think that this project is a very successful synergy of publishers, authors, urban space and a large socially-oriented business, as is the airport Sheremetyevo”.

“During a Year of Literature special attention is paid to promoting reading

among young, active audience, and the project ‘Virtual Library’ corresponds to this task, — noticed vice-president of the Russian Literary Union, CEO of the publishing group ‘AST Eksmo’ Oleg Novikov, — a Virtual Library in one of the largest airports in the world will daily provide thousands of visitors of the airport with additional intellectual leisure, especially young people. In dealing with young people, it is important to speak the same language with them, and the use of modern media tools allows to do

it easily". "The SVO Library" project is an example of synergy of all parties. The passenger gets the possibility to download and to read the best books during the trip. The Sheremetyevo is the first airport in Russia which took such an active part in the social initiative to promote reading and proposed such intellectual and spiritual leisure. For "LitRes" it is important to give an opportunity to the readers to get acquainted with the best modern literature in a mobile usable format and also to remind them about classical creations. More than 100 books are free of charge to download and to read online thanks to special arrangements with publishers and authors, — stated Sergey Anuriev, CEO of "LitRes".

"The SVO Library", opened as one of events dedicated to A Year of Literature, was created to satisfy the needs of all the passengers with a variety of literary preferences. In the terminals D, E, F, C (after passport control) in figurative library rooms on the virtual shelves there are 108 books for passengers, 60 of which belong to the Russian and foreign classical literature, 48 — to the modern literature.

For the convenience of passengers the books will be not only available to read online, but also to download in two ways: by scanning the QR-code in a "virtual rooms" or through a specially created website svo.knigavdorogu.ru. Content will be free of charge until the end of 2015.



Prague Hosts A Unique Business Aviation Show – The First CEPA EXPO & EBAA Regional Forum

The European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) and Central European Private Aviation (CEPA) have formed a partnership for the development of business aviation in Central and Eastern Europe by creating the new CEPA EXPO and EBAA Regional Forum.

The CEPA EXPO, which has traditionally been held in Prague annually, is the only event of its kind that seeks to promote the growth of business aviation in the CEE and to build bridges between Eastern and Western Europe. The CEPA EXPO 2015, will be held on October 14-15, 2015 at Prague Castle and will focus on main topic CATALYSING GROWTH OF BUSINESS AVIATION. The conference has flourished since its inception in 2010, and the 2014 Expo made history by becoming the first aviation body to hold an event in Prague Castle, attracting a record number of delegates. EBAA will join forces with CEPA to organise this year's event, which will further increase the benefits to participants and enhance the growing profile of the CEE as a key area for development.

Commenting on the collaboration, EBAA Chief Executive Officer, Fabio Gamba said, "Because of historic and

cultural reasons, amongst other things, getting EBAA's work and visibility across in the CEE is more challenging than in other parts of Europe.

"This, along with the growing importance of the sector in the region, has prompted us to team up with companies that already have a strong presence locally, such as CEPA. We feel it is now time to roll up our sleeves and pull together our respective strengths to turn this highly successful event into a truly not-to-be-missed event for Business Aviation."

CEPA Chairman, Roger Whyte said, "This co-operation agreement between CEPA and EBAA provides the basis for increasing recognition and advocacy of business aviation in Central and Eastern Europe."

"Over the last five years CEPA EXPO has become a vital forum for addressing the specific issues relating to business aviation in the region it represents. The new name, CEPA EXPO and EBAA Regional Forum, emphasises the greater scope and enhanced content which is being planned. I could not be more excited about what this means for the future growth of our industry in the CEE."



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Social Media In Aviation

– A Helping Hand Or A Slippery Slope?

According to the latest Jobvite survey, more than 75% of enterprises are planning to increase their spending on recruitment via social networks in 2015. This comes as no surprise, considering that currently about 2 billion people on earth are using social media every single day – pilots, flight crew and other aviation workers included. As a result, in aviation and other industries social media is becoming a key tool in shaping brand image as well as attracting new talent. Nonetheless, while social media may serve as a beneficial aid in most cases, one silly move on Facebook can also send you downhill, fast.



In 2010, only about 6% of all companies worldwide employed social media as a means to attract and recruit new talent. However, over the recent years this number has risen tremendously, with almost 96% of all enterprises currently acknowledging the benefits of online-assisted recruitment. Even such aviation giants as British Airways are now trying to attract more pilots by uploading innovative and attractive videos on YouTube.

In addition, more than two thirds of job-seekers aged 18 to 34 are report-

edly browsing for job positions via social networks, says Aberdeen Group. Keeping in mind that an average age of a flight attendant is under 30, it can surely serve as a great place to scout for some much needed fresh blood.

“Social media has definitely become an integral part of everyone’s life. This is exactly why such platforms can help to not only find the matching candidates, but also keep an eye on the ones that you have already hired,” shares Skaiste Knyzaite, the CEO of AviationCV.com. *“In fact, currently more than 93% of enterprises cross-*

check their candidates on social media before hiring. Aviation is no exception, as this industry is in need of candidates with strong values and the best possible posture. After all, pilots and attendants are the face of aviation and their actions strongly correlate with the airlines’ performance.”

According to the executive, a single harebrained phrase or photo in this sensitive sector can cause loads of distress for an airline, while also costing a valuable position for the employee. For instance, just a few months back, a flight attendant from Spirit Airlines

posted a picture of herself in Facebook, where she was sitting inside an aircraft engine. Unsurprisingly, it sparked considerable outrage of passengers who had been on the flight and resulted in her suspension. As the investigation is still on-going, it is hard to determine whether this action will cost the attendant her job, but a promotion is surely the word she can forget about for quite some time onwards.

And there are multiple similar stories out there. For instance, Virgin Airlines has already laid off 13 of

its workers due to their comments about the airline on Facebook, while Aeroflot has sacked its flight attendant for posting a picture where she was flashing a finger to the passengers on-board. Naturally, in the world where 140 characters can determine personal as well as corporate fate, proper damage control before anything like this happens definitely becomes a number one priority.

“Recruitment agents are constantly scanning and assessing candidates not only in person but also in terms of their digital footprint. Even though it

may seem like an unnecessary investigation, in the modern world it is, in fact, truly vital. In the case of aviation – a considerable part of reputation and global image is dependent on pilots and flight attendants. All companies must keep that in mind when recruiting,” comments Skaiste Knyzaite, the CEO of AviationCV.com. *“However, despite the dark side of social media, in the hands of recruitment professionals with excellent know-how, it is still a perfect tool for gaining comprehensive information about the candidate, as well as a great place to attract so much needed fresh aviation talent.”*

Lithuanian Airports: 11% Rise In Performance Over One Year After The Merger

As shown by a comparison of the first five months of 2014 and 2015, the performance of Lithuanian Airports grew 11% over the first year of joint operation. After the merger, the air gateways of Vilnius, Kaunas and Palanga witness the increase in passenger and flight volumes, the growing sales, EBITDA and the net profit.

During the first five months of 2015, the sales of aviation and non-aviation services of Lithuanian Airports grew 13%, compared to the same period last year. The increase in sales enabled the enterprise to earn more net profit: compared to January-May in 2014, it is now 65% higher, whereas EBITDA margin rose to 33%, i.e. by 2%. After the European Union decided not to support airport infrastructure investment projects, the growth of aviation and non-aviation income is of critical importance in

order to maintain and develop costly infrastructure.

To achieve an even better performance of Lithuanian Airports and to generate more benefit to the state, the Ministry of Transport and Communications has come up with an idea to administer and develop the enterprise by way of concession in the near future.

"I am delighted that a long-planned decision to merge Lithuanian airports served the purpose. As always, there

were a number of sceptics but the results of the very first year show the viability of the three international air gateways and the growing prospects: air transport possibilities from Lithuania have never been so broad," said Minister of Transport and Communications Rimantas Sinkevičius.

A huge job was done over a year after restructuring: after taking complex decisions and clarifying the functions of units and staff, the three airports, characterised by different systems and



standards, started operating as a single entity. Much attention was paid to the harmonization of infrastructure and its joining into a single network or the standardization of aviation security and flight safety as well as the increase of the range of services and the improvement of their quality. As a result, during the five months of this year the enterprise's operating costs rose 9%, compared to the same period in 2014.

"Lithuanian Airports have two faces – one seen by Lithuanian passengers on the interior, the other seen by foreign guests on the exterior. First of all, we are an air gateway into the world for

Lithuanians; it is therefore our goal to increase the number of countries and cities reached from Lithuania, thus creating better opportunities for business and tourism. Secondly, we are the first object the foreigner sees in our country; hence, we aim to create as good impression as possible by our services and service quality," said Gediminas Almantas, CEO of Lithuanian Airports.

17 airlines currently operate at Lithuanian airports, offering flights to 60 destinations. This year the country's three airports are expected to handle over 3.8 million passengers. 1.9 million passengers already travelled through Lithuanian airports during

the first six months of 2015. According to the strategy of Lithuanian Airports, Vilnius Airport is the principal airport in the country; Kaunas Airport, implementing the AeroHub KUN investment project, will become the base for aviation-related businesses, while Palanga Airport is targeted at the needs of Klaipėda Region and the handling of inbound tourism. During the five months of 2015 one employee of Lithuanian Airports handled 2.7 thousand passengers, compared to the same period in 2014, showing an 11% rise in performance.

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