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◀ **Dorin Ivascu**
Mr. Fixit in Romanian Aviation
page 8



◀ **Is Central Europe an Emerging Market?**
page 6



◀ **Dagmar Grossmann**
Vision and Determination
page 10



page 2

Vladimír Peták
Leader of a Major Player

Vladimír Peták, CEO ABS Jets, Prague

There is no doubt that ABS JETS is a major player in business aviation in Central and Eastern Europe and that such is noticed and recognized far beyond that geographical area. The proof of success may be found in the annual financial statements and performance records, in the accommo-

dations and facilities at the airport, in the extensive range of services that are provided 24/7, in the fleet of 12 aircraft based in Prague, Bratislava, Sofia and Moscow and in the team of 200 highly qualified and well trained employees. Maybe the key to the success lies in the spirit and motivation of the team that is

ready to take on any challenge and provide immediate responses to any customer request or needed business aviation services. To bring all the dynamics and synergy seamlessly and flawlessly together in one company, it takes true leadership. Vladimír Peták is ABS Jets' Leader.
continue on page 2 ▶

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“A strong company is built on the performance of a strong team. I believe in my team, I trust them, and I listen to them,” says Vladimir Petak. “My role is to lead by guiding, encouraging, accommodating, also by protecting, and what is most important, by listening. A good leader is a good listener; who listens well, will find

shareholders are expecting positive figures. He has the expertise needed for building profit structures. He learned to respect the human factor and physics in what is defined as “precise maneuvering in three-dimensional space,” to trust what instruments are telling but also trust the own judgments and know where limits end. Vladimir claims that he met the right people, at the right time, and the right company. Maybe he just happened to be the right leader. He is 37 now. The collection of experiences is important; age is not. Or is it? A younger management team fits in with the char-

means that we go the extra mile to meet their needs and expectations. Look at our range of services. Some people still think that we are an executive jet operator. Sure that is one activity, and of course aircraft management is another. But we also handle Line and Base maintenance and we are an Embraer approved service center. We provide Flight Planning Services, Executive Handling Services, Aircraft Sales, Charter and Brokerage, etc. Simply because our owners needed them, and our customers want them.”

How much time does a successful business executive have left for his private life? For one, no more aerobatic flying! Being the Chief Executive Officer of a 24/7 operation with a team that is avail-

„We take care of our customers as if they were our shareholders.“

acteristics of new economies where business aviation industry got really started a relatively short time ago. Yet, in that regard Vladimir’s wish is to get rid of the cliché “coming from the East”.

ABS Jets is not a small company anymore but rather an operation to be reckoned with by the “West”. “Take a look at our new Hangar N; the best there is and filled with aircraft like Gulfstream 550 and Embraer Lagacy 600. We have a total hangar capacity of 9,000

m2 in Prague,” says the proud ABS Jet CEO and continues: “We can offer the same or better standards of quality and the same or more services than in the “West”, and, we can present them at more reasonable favorable prices. We take care of our customers as if they were our shareholders; it



needed solutions. It is a good sign when the staff is happy to talk openly and directly to you. It is pleasing to see people come to their workplace with a smile on their face and looking forward to handle the challenges of the day. Yes, in many ways a team is a concentration of egos and experts, but on my team they are all positive and want to see their company grow, extend its services, and perform at its best.”

Vladimir who joined ABS Jets in 2007 at the age of 32 came from the financial industry. He did have aviation background as a pilot, but it was a bit more unusual kind of experience; his hobby was aerobatic flying. These are just a few remarkable elements of what makes him the professional that he is. He understands finances and appreciates that

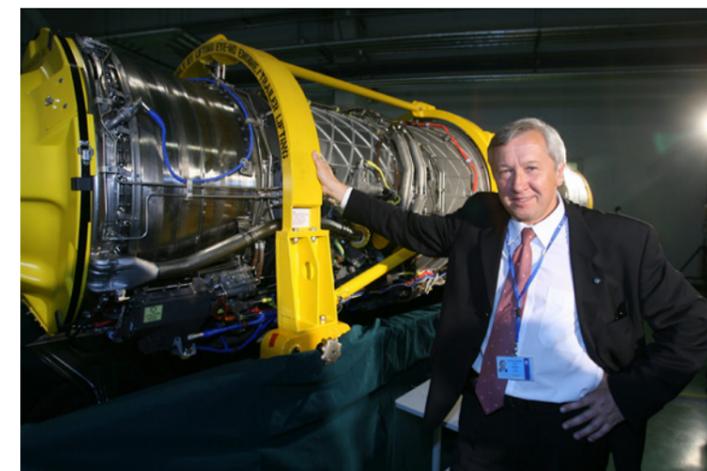


able and in action at any time, Vladimir, as the leader of his team also wants to be available to find solutions of unforeseen problems and to make the right decisions under the circumstances, and to make them fast. There is no such a thing as walking away from an unsolved problem or an unfinished task because the clock says five or because it is weekend. “We cannot afford to fail or make mistakes,” says Vladimir Petak resolutely. “We are a quality operation. That is what our company’s reputation is built on and that is what our customers are used to get from us without compromises or mediocrity.”

Welcome to Aviation Valley

Cdr. Bud Slabbaert

Aviation Valley is the region in the southeastern part of Poland that has evolved into one of the leading locations in Central Europe for conducting and developing projects associated with aviation. It is one of six European regions highly specialized in aerospace with a high concentration of manufacturing plants, scientific research centers, as well as educational and training facilities. It was no coincidence but a strategic path to growth and innovation. California’s Silicon Valley, the most famous industry cluster in the world may have been the example for this vibrant



Marek Darecki, company WSK Rzeszów

aeronautics hub in a country that is now the sixth largest economy of the European Union. Once one of the least prosperous regions of Poland now boasts a cluster of more than 100 companies and homegrown startups that are integrated into the global aerospace supply chain. All in all, the region’s dynamic growth has resulted in more jobs and an improved standard of living for its residents.

Initiative

In 2003, the initiative to create an industry cluster was taken by a group of aeronautic producers, suppliers and businessmen led by Marek Darecki CEO of WSK “PZL-Rzeszów a Polish producer of aviation engines and components which is now part of Pratt and Whitney. The Aviation Valley Association was established as a non-profit organi-

zation with the long-term objective to transform southeastern Poland into one of Europe’s leading aerospace regions, which would be able to provide the most demanding clients with a wide range of products and services.

A decade of growth

In less than a decade, the aerospace cluster has grown from a collection of

18 companies in 2003 to 102 companies now, and several new ones are in the process of applying for membership. Every new company is sure to find partners for cooperation for further developments. The aviation cluster companies cooperate with each other primarily on the customer - supplier basis (supply of parts, materials and raw materials). This is the most common model of cooperation between leading and small companies who are subcontractors and cooperators. Particularly intensive cooperation exists between the so-called spin-off companies - established under the restructuring of large enterprises - and the core company, which usually is the main purchaser of products and services of the newly created company.



Haas Distributor Abplanalp Celebrates New HFO and HTEC in Poland’s Aviation Valley opened in April 2013

The workforce increased from 9,000 in 2013 to around 23,000 employees, including engineers, designers and technicians and other high tech professionals. The Aviation Valley Association represents more than 90 percent of Poland’s aerospace industry. The combined exports of Polish companies in the aerospace sector reached around \$1.5 billion last year, and

their worldwide reputation is on the rise. According to the Polish Information and Foreign Investment agency, almost every passenger aircraft in the world has at least one part made in Poland.

Competitive Edge

Polish-based aviation companies are considered to be among the best suppliers for the global aircraft industry and they enjoy a growing demand for their parts and products from all over the world. They can offer the same standard of service and products but at lower prices than Western companies. The cost-to-quality ratio is excellent. High class engineering combined with competitive prices is essential, particularly in recent difficult economic times. It turned into an opportunity for growth since it has put pressure on multinational corporations to reduce costs, inclining them to seek "low-cost" investment destinations. Some claim that a Polish worker is 20 percent more productive than a worker from the West, although he still earns three times less than his Western counterpart. Even though labor costs are low, there is no intent to

strong commitment to invest in the education system. The region has 16 universities, colleges and vocational schools. It has European highest number of students enrolled in higher education per 1,000 residents. The intent was also to increase cooperation between the industry and universities and now Poland's aircraft-production hub has become a thriving center of R&D, with the local, well-established universities providing much of the know-how.

The Rzeszów University of Technology with a department of mechanical engineering and aviation, coordinates the Center of Advanced Technology "AERONET - Aviation Valley," which acts as an incubator for ideas, technology and specialists which companies can draw on. AERONET was founded for the purpose realizing interdisciplinary, collective and

tion techniques in the aerospace industry

Innovation Incubator

AEROPOLIS is a technology incubator in an environment with the ambiance of innovativeness. It is a place where high technologies connected with aviation, IT, and automotive industry will be concen-

„Almost every passenger aircraft in the world has at least one part made in Poland.“

trated. The incubator offers facilities for conducting research and production to entrepreneurs of startups. They will have an opportunity to hire premises suitable for both production and services on preferential terms. The center can accommodate 42 entrepreneurs for who offices and conference room are available. There are laboratories for composite and polymer materials, IT systems for diagnosis purposes, computer-aided research and design, aviation constructions, sources of renewable energy. In addition there will be a Laboratory of Biotechnology for In vitro plants cultures, biotisation of plants and allelopathy and for molecular markers.

An incubator of a different kind is the "University of Technology for Children," a learning laboratory created by the Aviation Valley Association. It encourages young people's interest in aeronautic sciences whereby leading professionals of the cluster companies are teaching children in the ages for 7 to 12.

Key to Success

One of the keys to success was to partner with the best; they partnered with US aerospace giants like Sikorsky, Pratt and Whitney and United Technology Corporation. Subsequently, US partners made a long-term investment in the valley's infrastructure, education and knowledge transfer. Most of the Polish aerospace companies are now foreign-owned and fully integrated into a global supply chain. As a direct result of the investment by multinationals and the dynamic development of production in the country, smaller, local companies are winning contracts to supply parts.



growing the industry on the basis of cost alone.

Education and R&D Center

From the beginnings, it was recognized that Research and Development activities related to the industrial activities in the region needed to be furthered in order to develop new solutions, processes, and products. In Aviation Valley there is a

long-term research and training programs, as well as effective implementation and commercialization of new technologies for the aerospace industry.

This advanced technologies center specialized in the fields of design and testing of aviation structures and propulsions, aviation teleinformatics and avionics systems, modern materials and surface engineering processes, and modern produc-



Images provided courtesy of Bombardier Inc.

resulted in orders for 50 local suppliers. The company also produces components for the Black Hawk which are exported to the United States, including cockpits, tail cones and pylons.

In 2008 Goodrich Corporation, now UTC Aerospace, started a new plant for production and assembling landing-gear parts, investing \$ 50 million in the operation and employing 250 people.

In 2010 Anglo-Italian Agusta-Westland acquired a majority stake in PZL-Świdnik, one of the biggest helicopter manufacturers in Poland, and invested around € 72 million in the factory.

They form the core of the Aviation Valley cluster and are an important strategic element of the development of the aviation sector in Poland.

Investments by the Millions

PZL Mielec, the biggest Polish manufacturer of aircraft, was acquired by American Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation in 2007. Since Sikorsky Aircraft invested more than \$ 125 million in the company, sales have tripled and the employment increased by 40 percent - that's 700 new jobs. The company modernized its production halls and hangars and introduced modern quality management systems. In 2011 it launched the mass production of the S-70i Black Hawk. The production of this utility helicopter has

Hispano-Suiza Polska, part of the French SAFRAN Group, has been operating in Poland since 2001 and produces elements for plane engines, among others, for Airbus A-380 and Boeing 787. In 2008 the company invested € 20 million in two new production facilities to host a department of structural components and to focus on engine nacelle production. The company employs about 450 persons.

The German manufacturer MTU Aero Engines announced that it is expanding its facility in size in the Aviation Valley by 50%, an investment of € 40 million. The company also intends to boost its R&D at the Polish plant. At the moment has a workforce about 500 employees when the

new facility run at full capacity that number will increase to 750.

Most recently, the European aviation and defense industry holding EADS has declared its intention to increase its presence in Poland and thinks of an investment of about € 7-8 billion. After France, Germany and Spain, Poland would become EADS fourth base. Currently the company employs about 800 people in Poland.

Vision for Europe's Aviation

Marek Darecki who was the brainchild and co-founder of the Aviation Valley Association and currently its CEO is traveling around the world to further promote the region and the industry. In 2010 he was appointed Board Member by the European Commission of the so-called European Commission High Level Group on Aviation and Aeronautics Research whose mission is to come up with a development vision of the European aviation industry up to 2050. Marek Darecki foresees Polish aviation as a significant contributor to Europe's vision for aviation in the years to come and in Aviation Valley competencies are developed that will allow shaping that Vision.

Poland's National Center for Research and Development of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education has announced a € 72 million investment in the development of innovative technologies within the aviation sector over 2013-17. The private sector is expected to provide another € 48 million for the project, funding that will push R&D forward in an industry for which innovation is essential.

The competitiveness of Poland's aviation industry is strengthening and giving the skills and innovativeness of its professionals a greater chance to shine. 



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Executive MBA in Prague

Is Central Europe an Emerging Market?

Cdr. Bud Slabbaert

Central Europe is a steady growth market for business aviation with a continuing growth potential. That may be the correct way of describing it. "Emerging Market" is a trendy expression just as "Innovation" has become a trendy word. One cannot draw a zero on a dollar bill and claim it was a 10 dollar bill and then call it monetary innovation or consider it emerging growth in capital assets. One cannot bet on the guess that one has a winning hand just from looking at the own cards. Examining the 68 page "Wealth Report 2012; A Global Perspective On Prime Property And Wealth" by Knight Frank Research/Citi Private Bank, it may be disappointing to find that none of the Central European countries or cities is mentioned for anything and neither now nor in future projections.

Deca and Centa

Who is the clientele for private aviation? Let's simply say: Millionaires. Well, maybe not. How about Deca-Millionaires? They have 10 million in assets. Can they afford buying an airplane with that amount in assets? How about Centa-Millionaires? The super rich with \$100 million in disposable assets who are more likely to be able to afford buying an aircraft. Now that we have sorted that out, what are HNWI (High Net Worth Individuals) and who are UHNWI (Ultra). Who cares anyway? It is important to understand right who is what when one goes through the numbers and statements of the wealth reports of the various institutions who are trying to keep track of millionaires and wealth, like WealthInsight, Merrill Lynch, Datamonitor, Boston Consulting Group, Capgemini/RBC, KPMG, Ledbury Research, etc.

According to Ledbury Research there are "only" 63,000 centa-millionaires worldwide.

Potential Enough

The London-based wealth consultancy WealthInsight, lists none of the Central or Eastern European countries among the top ten where millionaires live. As for cit-

ies in the world where they live, Moscow is listed as number 20. Knight Frank/Citi suggests that although the concentration of global mega wealth shows an undeniable momentum with the world's major emerging economies like Brazil, Russia, China, and India, when it comes to a home, education, or health, the familiar places are still drawing the super rich, and in Europe London, Paris, Geneva and Berlin are listed. Isn't that frustrating not to see at least Prague, Budapest, or Warsaw listed, when one really believes in the strength of Central Europe market? It shouldn't be. How many millionaire customers can a single business serve anyway? Central Europe maybe relatively small on a global scale, but there is no reason the region cannot flourish. There is ample potential and opportunity.

Music in the Air

According to the research of the investment bank Merrill Lynch, Bulgaria alone has over 10 thousand millionaires and Eastern Europe is one of the three regions with the biggest concentration of millionaires - Latin America and the Middle East are the other two regions. Capgemini /RBC Wealth Management's World Wealth Report states that Poland

saw its number of millionaires fall 7.8 percent however KPMG estimates that the number of centa-millionaires in Russia may increase by 76 percent, a figure that is also found in the Knight Frank/Citi Wealth Report. Generally it is claimed there are more than 65,000 millionaires across Central & Eastern Europe and that Russia has the largest millionaire population. What does this all tell you about CEE? There is music in the air!

Transparency and Public Opinion

One wonders where the wealth figures come from in any case. If one reads Forbes/Societe Generale's "Emerging Markets; Joining The Global Ranks of Wealth Creators" one finds that when it comes to openness about wealth Central and Eastern Europe score 3,9 on a scale from 0-10. However, overall transparency seems to be on the rise in Central and Eastern Europe, with Poland and the Czech Republic leading the way. As a result, the Ultra High Net Worth Individuals in these countries are more forthcoming and assets are easier to analyze. Actually, their countrymen are beginning to take pride in them. Yet, in some of those countries it is still an up-



Warsaw Chopin Airport



M.R. Štefánik Airport (Bratislava Airport)

hill battle for entrepreneurs to convince their fellow citizens that wealth creation is a positive phenomenon. Jordan Mateev, editor of Forbes in Bulgaria points out that the negative perception affects all wealthy individuals. "Even the honest businessmen are not transparent, because the general public hates rich people and believes not one has gotten

„There are more than 65,000 millionaires across Central & Eastern Europe.“

rich honestly." That makes one wonder what the Public Opinion of Private or Business Aviation in Central and Eastern might be. In Western Europe and the USA it is a concern for different reasons.

Well Positioned

None of the Central European countries is considered a major emerging market in the global economy. China and India are considered Tiger Markets. Usually BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China) are named as emerging markets. Africa is an emerging continent. Then there are EAGLE countries, the "Next Eleven", and so on. In more modest terms when looking at the summary of Emerging Markets by various analysts (IMF, FTSE, MSCI, The Economist, S&P, Dow Jones, BBVA, Colombia University) and excluding Brazil, Russia, India and China, then Poland and Hungary score quite well, followed by the Czech Republic. Mind that the strong and steadily growing economy of Germany has an impact on the economies of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic as it is the largest destination for Central European exports. With a strong neighbor to the West, a stable economy at home, and a major emerging market to the East, the Central European coun-

tries are well positioned and have a good potential for growth.

Where and Why

When looking at how well private and business aviation are performing, a common mistake is made by what figures to look at. Reports on aircraft manufacturing and statistics of aircraft sales are usually dominating the media. However, nothing flies without an airport. If one is looking for figures that really matter to a geographical area, then get some numbers from airports about movements, where the aircraft are coming from and where they are departing for. It pinpoints how much, where, when, and how often. Still, one element is missing: why? Every passenger flying to a destination goes there for a particular reason. Every passenger arriving on a private aircraft is a potential investor in the region. The impact of business aviation on a region

is crucial. The more development, be it commercial or leisure, the more need for transportation by large and small aluminum tubes with cockpit and wings.

Is Central Europe an "Emerging Market" for Business Aviation?

There are three ways of trying to make a point. One is based on objective facts like statistics and proven results; facts from the past. Another is based on a subjective way of making things plausible and believable, including collecting opinions of what others think will happen in the future; intelligent guessing. The third option is quoting the Prophecies of Nostradamus; oracle fiction. Serious investors are very careful people. They don't go by assertions. They want more; at the least they want to see a reliable study. Yet, they know very well that some studies contain multiplier effects which may be categorized as assumptions. So, after having looked at the study, they will still insist on having a due diligence report. Due



Vaclav Havel Airport in Prague

is what counts. The primary reason for private and business aviation is not to get somewhere fast, but rather to get to a destination for a particular activity which could be business, or could be leisure. Either way, in order to increase the aviation activity, regional economic development,

diligence is a degree of carefulness that a prudent person would exercise as a legitimate relevant standard for establishing liability. What is the serious investor's philosophy? They don't believe everything that is said and don't take anything for granted. ■



Dorin Ivascu

Mr. Fixit in Romanian Aviation

Cdr. Bud Slabbaert

A Dutchman who lived in England moved to Romania as Production Director for a Public and Private Event company. What was the point of keeping his airplane, a Piper Seneca IV in the UK, when he lived 2000 km away? On a misty day he takes off from England for a 7 hour flight to what he called uncharted territory, Romania. In an article for his aviation club friends in the UK, he describes Dorin Ivascu, MD of Baneasa airport as his most important contact in Romania who always seem to have solutions for any problem that comes up and he writes: "Dorin must be Mr. Fixit in Romanian Aviation. He is also the FBO for Tuzla, the first licensed private strip on the black sea coast where you can learn to fly, parachute jump and admire

the Romanian hippies at Vama Veche beach not far away. I truly recommend it! Come on European Union, break new ground, come and visit the new family member. People are friendly here, hospitable, and the young people speak good English..."

The year was 2007. But, who was this Mr. Fixit? Just to name a few things, Dorin Ivascu is Managing Partner of Regional Air Services, Owner of Tuzla Airport, President of Romanian Airport Services, President of Regional Air Support, President of the Romanian Association of Private Operators in Aviation (AROPA) and Board Member of APG, Air Promotion Group.

Dorin Ivascu was born in 1954, the year that Boeing tested the 707, the first jet-powered transport plane. His birth city Brasov, in the central part of Romania, was home of aircraft manufacturer IAR, Industria Aeronautică Română (Romanian Aeronautic Industry), which produced numerous airplane types and also built helicopters. Now, it is called EC Romania (Eurocopter Romania SA) and part of EADS. When Dorin grew up in Brasov, he was more interested international business and curious about foreign countries than aircraft, let alone airports. Brasov didn't have an airport; now a brand new airport is under construction near the city.

International Assignments

What better way to combine profession and interest in foreign countries than working for an airline. Almost ten years, he worked for TAROM, Romania's national airline. After his graduation in International Economic Relations (Foreign Trade) Dorin spend two years in all

the economy departments of the airline. He was part of a team that focused on the UK charter market and created a special charter product called Holiday Class. And then in 1981, his first foreign assignment: Director of the TAROM office in Tripoli Libya; the company had leased three aircraft to Libyan Arab Airlines which helped TAROM tremendously to become efficient at that time.

Next, after two years, an international assignment as TAROM Director in Singapore from where he suggested marketing the airline in the whole region. His suggestion was agreed upon and soon thereafter he became in charge of South-East Asia and subsequently traveled a lot in the area.

In 1986 Dorin was appointed as Director for TAROM in UK. From his London office he succeeded to get the airline's cargo planes leased to an UK carrier, three passenger planes to other British carriers, and last but not least he was behind the scenes seriously involved in the start-up of RyanAir by leasing three TAROM aircraft to them.

Return to Romania

After six years abroad, Dorin came back to Romania. He switched from the private to the public sector as Chief of the International Division of the Civil Aviation Department and was put in charge of negotiating and finalizing the country's air space agreements, over-

flights and landing approvals, as well as handling the ICAO and all other international relations.

But Dorin's years abroad weren't quite over yet. TAROM needed him as Director for North America in New York where he successfully added another flight to the schedule and increased the passenger numbers. But, that was the last assignment in a foreign country and Dorin returned to Romania to stay and back in the function of Chief of the International Relations Division until 1989.

"You know one of the funniest things," says Dorin with a big grin, "is that some people here seem to think that I was spy for Romania because I spend so much time abroad during the communist years, which was considered unusual and almost suspect. What they don't seem to understand is that any internationally operating airline, then and now, has its professionals to represent them, handle the marketing and supervise operations at locations around the world. But..., if anyone wants to offer me a role in a James Bond film, I will consider doing it. I may not be as young and handsome as I was then, but Hollywood as my next international assignment? Why not?"

New Business Opportunities

At the end of 1998 the communist regime fell and opportunities for private

enterprise popped up. Travelling to many countries while working for the national airline gave Dorin the experience and confidence in international ways and rules of doing business. Three months after the fall of the old regime, Dorin and some former colleagues from TAROM put their heads together and thought of starting some kind of air taxi operation by using the aircraft of the former presidential fleet. There was an older inactive company called LAR, Linii Aeriene Romane, that was revitalized and Dorin became the Director General of the new independent airline. A five-year lease for the government's fleet was negotiated with the Air Force. They had no money on hand to start with but, with Dorin's international management experience and his knowledge of economics, and of course hard work, they were able to make a \$ 300,000 profit in the first year. They organized all government flights and a large number of private charter flights. The airline lasted for three years. Then, the military wanted its VIP fleet back and on their turn reorganized it into a new state-owned airline called Romavia.

At that time there was no other solution but to get reorganized. Dorin had become a modern style entrepreneur who would always look for business solutions and find new opportunities. For the time being, he was director of a new travel agency that was started in Bucharest and he was co-administrator of a number of smaller companies in trading, accounting, auditing and capital investment. In 1996 the real opportunity and challenge came up. With the airport staff, a handling company was setup: Romanian Airport Services, first Romanian FBO, based at Baneasa Airport. With the city staff, a travel service was set up that became general sales agent (GSA) for several airlines, and it also operates an IATA authorised Training Center, as well as a Pilotshop. Romania Airport Services was created from scratch with just three employees; the handling company is now present on four Romanian airports and employs a staff of 120.

Ph.D. and Lecturer

Since 2001, he could be called Dr. Dorin Ivascu after completing his dissertation on "Product distribution in transports" which concentrated on the idea of distribution for inter-modal transports.

"Here I was, an active business man standing in the Aula of the Academy of Economic Sciences in Bucharest on their

on the 100 year anniversary. In my faculty only 4 diplomas were awarded; the recipients, two prestigious professors and two students, and I was one of them. It was an emotional moment for me and, of course, I felt proud. After all, at that time, I was already President of three companies and owner of an airport. I didn't need study as a career builder. Because, I had my business obligations, the academic work took me almost five years to complete. For one I was committed to do this and secondly the thesis was on a subject that was dear to me."

Dorin never made a big thing out of his academic title, no Dr. Dorin, he simply remained Dorin to all.

Long before, in 1978, he had graduated in International Economic Relations (Foreign Trade) at the

Academy of Economic Studies (ASE) in Bucharest. He was President of his faculty's Student Union of 2,200 members. During summer breaks of the university, he worked as a guide and a clerk for the Romanian Automobile Club and Hertz Rent-A-Car. That was Dorin, the student from then.

„...a kind of guru in Romania's aviation industry..."

Now, for more years, Dr. Dorin Ivascu himself is lecturing "airline management" at the Polytechnic University Bucharest as well as "Logistics" at the Academy of Economic Sciences for Masters Degree coursework only.

No Laughing Matter

Being successful, always having new ideas and seeing business opportunities sometimes results in being confronted by opponents or competitors. Tuzla Airport is in the process of acquiring the "International" status and the procedure to obtain customs and emigration has been moving between government agencies for two years. Close to a favorable decision, it suddenly found the attention of some of the media but in a way that is no laughing matter. Dorin was accused of having relations to a company in Tanzania that may be involved trafficking of drugs and diamonds if one would believe these media reports.

"What happened is that my opponent apparently has hired a PR agency called AMI.

I don't know what went through their mind. But they must have been digging deep to find that there was also a company in Tanzania by the name of Regional Air Services. I bet you, if you look long enough on the internet, you will find more companies by that name; I just happen to know that there is also a Regional Air Services in Texas. I have no connection of any kind with either one. But just using a coincidental same name to create bad PR, I find quite unprofessional. Would I connect the PR company's name AMI to the abbreviation of the Alliance of Mental Ill in the USA or Action on Mental Illness in Canada? I wouldn't do that; that is silly! Actually, a friend of mine brought this to my attention. I can tell you that we laughed wholeheartedly about it."

Airport Owner

Nine years ago, Dorin and a partner bought into a former utilitarian aerodrome in Tuzla. They had four Antonov-2 aircraft and two Kamov-26 helicopters, all for agriculture purposes. They gave it an all-out effort and turned it into the first private airfield in Romania including parachuting school, flight school, company flying off shore, training center for sea survival and for rescue efforts by flight crews. Because of the oil and gas exploration in the Black Sea it is important to the oil companies to have an operation center for helicopter transportation from and to drilling platforms. Tuzla would not need any runway expansion or a new control tower. It only needs the international status and custom and immigration agents on hand. The activities will have a tremendous positive economic impact on the surrounding communities. That is where economic rivalry comes into play.

"All through my life, I have tried to be constructive and to do more than was expected from me. I was never keen on politics," Dorin says. "I have always appreciated proper business principles and a free market because it allows for things to be developed as needed and results can come faster." He was called Mr. Fixit others consider him to be a kind of guru in Romania's aviation industry. "Nonsense, I'm a more down-to-earth person than most people think. Believe me that I have a heart in the right place. I'm a proud Romanian with a vision, and have the background and experience to determine what is right and good for the national aviation interests and how it fits in with international developments." ■

Dagmar Grossmann

Vision and Determination



Dagmar Grossmann, CEPA founder and CEO of Grossmann Jet Service

If there is a bit of a time span between meeting a person and an interval in being part of an event, it gives a better picture of the difference between now and then; maybe a bit of distance is the trick to it. I had not seen Dagmar Grossmann for about two and a half years and so it was a pleasure to set up an appointment to meet in Prague. I looked forward to it after all this time. We decided to meet at "The Bakeshop" on Kozi near the Old Town Square. It is one of Dagmar's favourite establishments to meet for a conversation under some coffee and fine pastry. From the moment we walked in I loved the very relaxed ambiance of the place. I spent a moment just staring at the beauty, the architectural, and mouth-watering edibles. We both ordered our coffees and she wanted a piece of French apple tart with it. I couldn't stay behind and I ordered a piece of Bakeshop's famous 'Death-by-Chocolate'; what the heck, it sounds challenging. We cordially exchanged a bit of the usual „where have you been lately“ and „how are you doing“ and then got started.

thing much more significant. In the meantime, we now have an expo and all major players of the industry are gathering and by participating contribute to the success. Besides that, we are also seeing an increasing involvement of government representatives which shows that an event like this brings value to the region and has earned the status of being important and significant."

In front of me I have sitting an example of a woman who works hard, strongly believes what she is doing and has a vision where things eventually can lead to. Yet, things don't always come easy.

"Sometimes a disappointment in one year turns into a positive surprise or opportunity the next year. Did you experience such a thing yourself at CEPA EXPO?" I asked.

Dagmar lifted her cup and looked at me over the brim.

"Yes, I had to go through a lot of these experiences. And so did my Chairmen and our team."

She took a sip of her cappuccino as if it was fine wine and

"What are the two or three most significant changes from the first CEPA conference in 2010 to the fourth, now in 2013?" I wanted to know as a logical opener of the interview.

"Wait, let me think for a moment." Dagmar said.

The waitress brought our order and with a 'Cappuccino' for Dagmar and 'Double Americano' for me, in front of us, Dagmar began:

"I believe that the most and significant change is the contribution that we made to the market, the growth that was initiated and the degree of information and exchange that we could provide to the entire industry. You'll remember yourself that it was a relatively small conference in 2009"

I did indeed as I was one of the speakers during that first event. Sure it may have been a relative small meeting but at that time I felt that it was an appealing initiative that already attracted a gathering of interesting professionals and that we would hear more about in the years to come.

"Bud, my vision was that what was started for the purpose of getting together once, in a while should grow out into some-



continued:

"Most of our frustration resulted from the fact that in a really slow market there are still signs of jealousy or envy over an event and its success. Instead it should be considered as a benefit when attempts are made to positively contribute to the market situation, bringing in new ideas, and helping to pick things up."

She put her cup down, paused for a moment and looked a bit away outside through the window of the Bakeshop, and then again turned her eyes straight to mine:

"You know, to be honest, that is something I will never understand. It is like you are a hospital or a school and people in the neighbour district are jealous of that school."

She paused again and was now a bit cooler but released as she continued:

"Referring to your question, it means Yes! This, for instance, happened to us as around the first event when we saw that people just smiled about us and the success of the CEPA EXPO. Now they are asking for more tickets to bring more delegates. By turning the whole event into a shareholding company the gates are open to companies and individuals to contribute and bottomline; help all of those interested to prosper in the field of business aviation. Such an association and event was missing in our part of Europe."

"Dagmar, let's talk a moment about the beginnings of CEPA, the Central European Aviation Association and CEPA EXPO as 'Open Corporation'. In April this year, it was announced that CEPA intends to sell approximately 50% of CEPA EXPO's newly issued stock. Things are definitely happening, so to say. What was the original impulse for the organization of which you are the founder?"

"My idea has always been to connect the East and the West in terms of business aviation. And the truly basic impulse was really my own personal experience

as a person who originated from the "West" and who lived and worked in the "East", with all its problems and misconceptions. I believed that these were just small things that happen and it would not be difficult to sort them out. And then, I founded CEPA to create a platform for all who are interested in this region and have the similar issues to deal with. In reality it has proven that it was the perfect moment and that the market was ready for it and often experiencing exactly the same problems that I went through. So, it started at right time, in the right place, for the right reasons and we'll make things move."

Dagmar didn't only sound determined; anyone knowing her will confirm that she is a resolute lady. The next logical question that I had to ask was:

"What would the activities of the organization ideally result in, for instance, next year or in two years from now?"

"There is no doubt in my mind that we need to do the event at the airport. So, at this year's show we added an 'airline day'. It is again something new that CEPA does and not is seen anywhere else. We have to examine the synergies that we may have in our two aviation branches and how we can approach the problems we have in common. Some may think that changing much is not good for a brand or an event that has already established itself successfully in a promising market. But, I believe that it is important to widen our horizons. We decided that for now we would postpone holding the event at the airport, but would change to that location next year and we will take the appropriate steps for it in the beginning of 2014. Let's say that the 'airline day' was an initial move in that direction."

"Looking back at the past three conferences, what was the most pleasant CEPA

EXPO experience to you?" I knew that she has a number of upbeat occurrences but wanted to find out what was the most outstanding to her.

"That many quotes were made and research results of the UHNWI study were the foundation of further analysis of the entire business aviation industry. With our groundbreaking research of the Ultra High Net Worth Individuals, we were able to present something that is unique to our industry; a market research study that deals with the problems and the key

„Works hard, strongly believes in what she is doing and has a vision.“

things and. It provides important information about our private, executive and VIP clientele and gives guidance for how to further develop the aviation business in Central and Eastern Europe. Getting that study accomplished really makes me feel proud."

I noticed some emotion in Dagmar's voice and in the look of her eyes. Not surprisingly because the study was indeed unique and praised widely.

"What do you see as the future milestones and ultimate goal of the CEPA EXPO, for instance in numbers?" was next on my list of queries.

"Well, in numbers, I see the turnover to be increased significantly. We will reach the seven digit ceiling within a relatively short period."

"And the future as for any new event, session, or happening?" I added to my question.

"For one, I want to see the show as a major event at the Prague Airport in 2014. And I want to see all those chalets of the main aircraft manufacturer there. That is my vision and the vision of my Chairman as well."

"And are you still thinking of a static display," I inquired.

"Oh, yes, we'll have it at the next CEPA EXPO in 2014!" Dagmar assures me confidently.

"Dagmar, every year you have a new special surprise for the attendees of the



Gala Dinner. Last year it was a beautiful French chanteuse. What is this year's surprise for the guests?"

"A surprise is a surprise" she smiles with a mysterious expression in her face and waits a moment as if she is going to keep it a secret but then continues: "We focus on the details in our events. This

year we'll have the CEPA EXPO party in the SAHARA CAFE. You may guess that it has to do with the Arabic world but... we do not import a camel! That's all I can tell you."

"Secret kept, curiosity level raised, and knowing Dagmar it will be a pleasant surprise. Maybe a 'One Thousand and One Nights' fairytale event," I speculated in my mind; she knows how to make a party an episode to be remembered.

Our interview was about to end and I needed one last question answered to make things complete.

"Tell me, what are the plans in next five years for Dagmar

Grossmann as a private person and as the successful entrepreneur?"

Dagmar closed her eyes for a moment in some meditative pose but the answer came fast as was to be expected from a woman who knows what she wants.

"I wish to have a good private life and that all my visions will come true, and

that I will still remain the person who is happy when the sun shines and the coffee is smells good."

She looked at her watch. "Oh, I have to go now. I have another important appointment."

"The typical business woman Dagmar," I thought as she got up.

"I'll see you in a couple of weeks at CEPA," she said as she was about to move away from our table.

"Dagmar?" I asked.

She turned around as if she expected a question that I might have forgotten to ask.

"Dagmar, where did you get those nice shoes?" I asked her with grin.

"Chanel gave them to me," she answered. I could see that she had a hard time keeping a straight face while telling a little lie.

"Why on Earth does Chanel give you shoes?" I acted as if I believed her.

"Because I paid for them." She gave me big smile, turned around and left The Bakeshop.

"That is exactly what I assumed," I mumbled in myself as I looked at the notes I took during our talk. "Good interview. An amazing and wonderful person."



Dagmar Grossmann and Philippe Lienard, AELIS Group and CEPA chairman

Slovak International Air Fest

Mário Patlevič

The Slovak aviation agency (SAA) recently organised an event called SIAF 2013 (the Slovak International Air Fest). The event took place at the Sliac Military Airbase from 31st August until 1st September, this was the third staging of the event since 2010.



Visitors to SIAF were able to see more than 50 different aircraft, which were mainly military aeroplanes from 14 countries. The flying display featured an exciting and vibrant show by historical fighter aircraft, the Red Bull pilots, aerobatic teams and modern fighter aircraft and helicopters.

There was an opportunity for visitors to sit in the cockpits of some of the aircraft and the chance to talk with pilots and take photographs and secure the autographs of the well know pilots.

Positive and good feeling of SIAF 2013 was spreading very fast and it was great

bet to come and see. Sounds of engines of beautiful aircraft were making shivers every time when aircraft made its turn and flew in front of visitor among the runway.

Among the more popular attractions were the historical aircraft like the Yak-3, the P-51D Mustang, the F4U Corsair, the Supermarine Spitfire MkXVI and the Mig-15. Making its debut at SIAF was the unmanned Hermes 450 manufactured by the Israeli company Elbit Systems. One aspect of the event that caught the attention of visitors was the large concentra-

tion of former Warsaw Pact fighters including the MiG-29, the Su-22 Fitter, the An-24, the SU-25 Frogfoot and the Su-27 Flanker.

Spanish aerobatic pilot Patrulla Águila put on an amazing display as did extreme pilot Zoltán Veres in his Extra 300 aircraft, Očovský bačovnia and Ceremonial arrival, which was in colours of Slovakia followed by airdrop.

The air display opened with a formation which was a combination of a Slovakian MiG-29, an L-39 Albatros, a Czech Gripen and a L-159 ALCA. The display was created to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Czech and Slovak armed forces.

The flying display and aircraft were not only thing to see at SIAF. There was the chance to taste great Slovak traditional food, try and learn how to do the first aid, or see and experience the latest video games in the X-Box hangar. The Slovak military and police forces put on a display of armoured vehicles, weapons and equipment at the show.

In conclusion, SIAF 2013 was a great event with displays of excellent and interesting aircraft. SIAF 2013 was attended by over 100 000 visitors which shows how popular the event has become. On this basis the next SIAF show should be even bigger and better, we have high hopes for the next SIAF!



Morocco Tour 2013

Unique students project supported by ABS Jets

Four Czech students have a passion and determination to realize uncommon and extraordinary projects. Two of them are pilots who want motivate other young pilots or those who dream to one day become a pilot and want to encourage them to follow their aspirations and create new ideas. A whole year they planned for it. Initially the idea was to fly from Northern Germany to Gibraltar. But they became intrigued by the fact that the African continent was in close range and that they might as well extend their expedition and call it the Morocco Tour 2013.



“Our intention was not just to fly south and back, we wanted to eventually pass on our experiences to all who might consider a similar flight,” explained team spokesman Martin Maloun, “and some North African experiences with the geography of the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara could be a rich addition to our total travel impressions.” The Moroccan Tour 2013 was organized as a team whereby each member makes its own important contribution. No one could be missed and no one is more essential than anyone else. Besides Martin Meloun, there were his co-pilot Radim Bradáč, as well as photographer/reporter Stefan Gorej and photographer Jaroslav Gorej who jointly took about 4,500 photographs.

A single-engine piston Cessna C-172RG OK-JKV, nicknamed Julka, was the aircraft of choice. At the time, it was based in Itzehoe near Hamburg and that is where the trip started on July 22nd. The planned flight route: Hamburg – Verdun

– Biscarrosse – Madrid – Gibraltar – Tangier – Rabat – Fes – Gibraltar – Barcelona – Marseille – Venice – Bolzano – Innsbruck, and the final destination was Letnany airport near Prague where they eventually arrived on the 8th August. It was a 18-day mission, flying 6,500 km through the airspace of eight countries and all together 42 flight hours. They landed on 23 aerodromes varying from small abandoned airfields that are hardly recognizable in the desert, to some major international airports that were almost impossible to miss.

Making such tours seems to become more popular every year and more Czech crews take to the sky.

One of the first concerns among the young pilots is the high cost of such flights. Students can be curious and undertaking but they are not typically wealthy. The engine needs the fuel; the crew needs a place to stay overnight. At times the expenses were high along the French Mediterranean coast and some-

times they were lucky to find an airport like Biscarrosse on the French Atlantic coast where no landing fees are charged.

Different countries, different cultures, customs and people; one has to frequently adjust to the circumstances. In aviation, plans are just what is written on paper. The uncertainty of the weather, be it a belt of thunderstorms or having to deal with strong headwind at 70 knots groundspeed or less can force changes to the travel plans. A landing in Er Rachidia airport on the edge of the Sahara in the very eastern part of Morocco brought a twist in the plans because unexpectedly there was no AV-GAS fuel available. A planned landing in Barcelona became impossible due to delays and the OK- JKV and its crew ended up in Ibiza. The daily changes can be bit demanding. Almost always it is necessary to solve minor problems and situations that should not be challenging in any way, yet usually a simple procedure or small issue can become a big stress-

ful matter. And after having flown more than 500 km in a single engine small aircraft, gradually crew fatigue can become noticeable. But, the team always kept its integrity and remained cool. Under all circumstances it is necessary to prevent that any situation may have an effect on flight safety. And so, every couple days the team took some time off for rest and relaxation; sometimes a day with an excursion to a museum or monument in a city, sometimes sleeping a bit longer, or taking time for a nice dinner helps to keep a healthy balance.

On an international trip the command of aviation English is crucial. The team knew that Czech phraseology wouldn't get them very far. In France, a basic knowledge of the language is really useful; at least to be able to say “Bonjour, comment ca va?” and “Parlez-vous Anglais?” as starters for a conversation. Of course a word of Spanish or two are also helpful when flying there. Yet, often words of any kind are not enough and general improvisation talents for communication become essential and then hand gestures, facial expressions, doodling and writing on paper are to be

tried. Yet, anything with a friendly smile can do wonders. It is never downright impossible to resolve the communication barrier. People are generally friendly. But when dealing with formalities of serious customs or law enforcement agents may take an extra effort to understand each other.

“It was a trip full of interesting and valuable experiences both in the air and on the ground that we will never forget. Knowledge that we will now share with people interested in flying and aviation through our non-profit organization Aerolife that we founded earlier for that purpose after a successful 4,500 km long flight of Western Europe called Eurotrip 2012,” concludes Martin Maloun and he adds: “None of these undertakings could have been realized without the support of great partners and I would like to especially thank ABS Jets for their generous support. If we had any questions or problems far away, we could always, 24/7, count on the assistance of the ABS Flight Operations and Services staff in Prague. You have no idea how comforting it is to have such a reliable partner.”

“We gladly supported the Moroccan Tour 2013 project,” comments Vladimir Petak, ABS Jets' CEO. “We recognized the tremendous enthusiasm of the four the students. Just the fact that they were able to organize themselves into every detail and were determined to cover all expenses from their own student savings proves great courage. ABS Jets is happy to persuade young people to explore and gather new experiences for their lives and careers. We look forward to an increasing number of such promising students.”

ABS Jets has operational bases in Prague and Bratislava. The company's activities include: Aircraft Management, Flight Planning and Support, Aircraft Maintenance, Flight Charter & Brokerage, FBO & Executive Handling Services, Consulting Services, Aircraft Sales and Travel Management. ABS Jets employs nearly 200 highly qualified employees. ABS Jets is recipient of various awards including “Best Business Jet Operator” and “Commercial Business Flying Safety”. ABS Jets is a member of EBAA, NBAA and RUBAA. ■



Flexjet Doubles Firm Learjet 85 Aircraft Order

Flexjet, LLC – a newly created company funded by a group led by Directional Aviation Capital – announced it is doubling its recent Learjet 85 aircraft order of 30 aircraft by converting 30 options into firm orders for a total of 60 business jets valued at approximately \$1.2 billion, based on the 2013 list prices. The options were originally purchased on September 5, 2013 as part of the historic order for up to 245 Bombardier business jets. Additionally, Flexjet, LLC is procuring incremental options for 20 Learjet 85 aircraft. This latest transaction increases the total firm aircraft order to \$2.4 billion for 115 aircraft and 150 options. If all options are exercised, the total value of the order will increase from \$5.2 to \$5.6 billion.

“Anticipation for the Learjet 85 aircraft has been building since the program was first launched. In fact, we have already sold 68 shares to those eager to be the first to fly on the business jet that is set to redefine the midsize category,” said Deanna White, President, Flexjet. “The Learjet 85 aircraft is poised to usher in a new generation in flight, and we relish the opportunity to welcome even more of these revolutionary new jets to our fleet.”

“The original Learjet 85 order for 30 firm aircraft and 75 options was an indicator of how important we felt this midsize aircraft was to our core market,”



Learjet 85

added Kenn Ricci, Principal, Directional Aviation Capital. “After reviewing our long-term fleet strategy and listening to customer needs, we believe the Learjet 85 aircraft will be a distinct competitive advantage and an important contributor to our future growth. This investment confirms our belief the Learjet 85 aircraft will undoubtedly meet the needs of our owners for many years to come.”

Flexjet is the launch customer for the all-new Learjet 85 aircraft – the fastest and most spacious aircraft in its segment – and recently completed an

exclusive six-city tour to showcase its highperformance advantages, innovative technology and unmatched comfort to hundreds of current owners and prospective customers. The first deliveries from today’s order are scheduled to begin following the original firm aircraft order for 30 Learjet 85 aircraft.

Last month, Flexjet announced its purchase by a group led by Directional Aviation Capital and the largest private aviation order in its history valued at approximately \$5.2 billion for up to 245 Bombardier business jets. ■

Croatia Airlines Profitable for First Time in 5 Years

Croatia’s national carrier Croatia Airlines, which the government recently issued a tender for interest in its sale, have for the first time in five years recorded positive business results.

According to a report published today on the Zagreb Stock Exchange, Croatia Airlines, in the first nine months of this year, achieved net profit of 20.3 million



Croatia Airlines

kuna (2.7 million EUR). In the same period last year the company recorded a net loss of 10 million kuna (1.3 million

EUR), which makes the total positive shift of 30.2 million kuna (4 million EUR). Total revenues of the company in the first nine months of this year amounted to 1.22 billion kuna (160 Million EUR).

Passenger revenues, compared to 2012, were down 8 percent as a result of restructuring measures and pilot and cabin crew strikes in May. At the same time the number of passengers in the period decreased by 7 percent compared to the same period last year. ■

Citation Latitude delivering advanced capabilities to mid-size category

Cessna Aircraft Company, announced a significant addition to the eagerly anticipated Citation Latitude mid-size business jet. The cockpit of the seven- to nine-passenger jet will come equipped with auto-throttles as part of the Garmin G5000 avionics package.

The Citation Latitude mock-up is on display throughout the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) Business and Aviation Convention and Exhibition in Las Vegas this week. The fuselage mock-up features an added informational gallery in the aft portion of the cabin, showing program highlights and marking the aircraft’s progression towards its anticipated first prototype flight in the first quarter of 2014.

Terry Shriner, Cessna business leader for the Latitude, said: “Auto-throttles are a valuable addition to the already impressive flight deck on the Latitude. Because the pilot no longer has to manually con-



Citation Latitude

trol the engines, auto-throttles represent a big leap ahead in convenience and ease of operations for business jet operators in the mid-size category.”

A common feature on larger aircraft, the addition of auto-throttles to the Latitude flight deck will play a role in reducing pilot workload. The Garmin G5000 avionics keep the most important flight information available at the

pilot’s fingertips using touch screen displays while the auto-throttle simultaneously controls engine power and adheres to flight parameters using the system’s auto-pilot feature.

Michael Thacker, Cessna senior vice president of Engineering, says: “The

Latitude began as an exciting concept, and it just keeps getting better. We have increased the aircraft’s range by 500 miles, boosted the cabin entertainment capabilities, improved cabin volume, and now we are bringing auto-throttles to the mid-size category. You cannot find an aircraft in this category that tops the Latitude in terms of operational ease, cabin comfort and performance.” ■

Airbus develops presence in Malaysia with new services

Airbus is set to develop its presence in Malaysia with the expansion of its joint venture maintenance unit Sepang Aircraft Engineering (SAE) and the establishment of a new Airbus Customer Services Centre. The developments are the first in a series of projects that will see the manufacturer increase its footprint in the fast-growing South East Asian region and provide more support

services for operators of its aircraft.

The initiatives in Malaysia were announced at a ceremony at the SAE premises at Kuala Lumpur International airport today to launch construction of a second hangar at the facility. The ceremony took place in the presence of Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Sri Najib Razak and was attended by Fabrice Bréquier, President and CEO, Airbus.



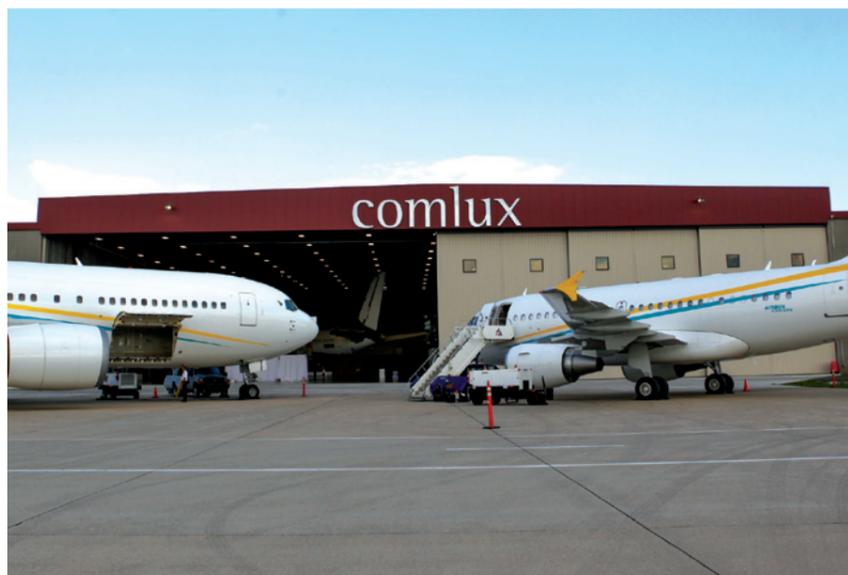
Airbus A380

The new hangar at SAE, which specialises in the maintenance and overhaul of Airbus single aisle aircraft, will have a floor area of 13,000 square metres and will be capable of accommodating three A320 Family aircraft for major maintenance checks. This will be in addition to the existing hangar, which can ac-

commodate six single aisle aircraft at any one time.

The new Airbus Customer Services facility, 100 per cent owned by Airbus, will be located adjacent to SAE. It will be an expansion of the manufacturer’s global network of offices providing 24/7 specialised major aircraft engineering and repair services. Existing offices offering this support are located in Toulouse, Wichita and Beijing.

“The announcements we are making today reflect the enormous potential we see for the aerospace industry in South East Asia,” said Fabrice Bréquier, President and CEO, Airbus. “With a skilled talent pool, quality workmanship and competitive cost base, Malaysia is one of the countries that have the right ingredients to become a key partner for Airbus. This is in line with our strategy to have a stronger footprint in international markets and develop our support services for operators of our aircraft nearer to their home bases.” ■



Comlux America

Comlux America expands to wide body completions and reinforces its sales team

In October 2013 Comlux The Aviation Groups announced that Comlux America, its completion and maintenance center based in Indianapolis USA, is expanding its work scope to include wide body VIP aircraft (Airbus ACJ330-ACJ340-ACJ380 and Boeing 767BBJ-777BBJ-747BBJ)

It has only been four years since Comlux received the approval from both manufacturers as an authorized completion facility, and to date the focus has been solely on narrow body aircraft. Comlux has already completed several aircraft completions including ACJ319, ACJ320, BBJ, BBJ3, B757 and soon an ACJ321, demonstrating an ability to deliver on time the highest quality interiors to its VIP customers. Plans are in place to immediately launch an extension to the existing state of the art facility which was inaugurated in 2012, upon signature of a VIP wide body completion. The extension of the hangar should take six months to complete. The expansion will increase the total size from 128,000 sq ft to 157,000 sq ft. The new facility will be able to accommodate in total one wide body aircraft plus up to six narrow bodies at the same time.

"When I see the quality of the work

accomplished in the past few years and the strong motivation of our teams, I have no doubt that Comlux America is ready for this move into the wide body VIP market. There is huge potential not only to catch green completions but also second hand aircraft refurbishments and maintenance," says Richard Gaona, President of Comlux Group.

In parallel to its widebody expansion, Comlux America is pleased to announce the appointment of Boyd Hunsaker as Director of Sales. Boyd Hunsaker, 44 years old, is coming from the major refurbishments and maintenance side of business. He has worked many production management roles including 7 years as Sales Director, where he signed multiple jobs on both narrow and wide body VIP aircraft.

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Airbus receives prestigious European Award

Airbus has won an award in recognition for its contribution to European economy and integration. The prestigious "Golden Victoria for the European Idea of the Year", awarded by the German Association of Magazine Publishers (VDZ), was handed over by European Union Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger to Airbus Chief Operating Officer Günter Butschek at the "Publishers' Night" in Berlin. It is the first time the accolade was given to a company. Previous laureates include European Commission President José Manuel Barroso. Airbus is European integration in action. Our success highlights what Europe can achieve when working together," said Günter Butschek. "From start-up to world market leader in such a strategic and competitive industry – I hope that our success story sends a signal to other European business leaders and decision makers."



"Airbus has received European Award 'Golden Victoria', handed over by EU Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger to Airbus Chief Operating Officer Günter Butschek in Berlin.

The VDZ Board considered Airbus to be an outstanding example of European leadership, stating that Airbus highlighted the strength of the European ideal and the immense achievements that can be accomplished by a joint European undertaking, when stakeholders align.

It all began with "Europe's dream of flying": Some forty years ago, the idea to create a common European aerospace company was shared by Germany, France, Spain and, later, the United Kingdom. The nations joined forces to develop aircraft Made by Europe that would be produced at facilities in various countries. Few expected the newly formed Airbus to break into the world market. Over time, however, Airbus not only built aircraft that were able to compete, but became the world's leading aircraft manufacturer in the last decade. Today, Airbus has sold more than 13,000 aircraft to nearly 500 customers and operators worldwide. Headquartered in Toulouse, France, Airbus is an EADS company. ■

■

Prime Minister Formally Opens Bombardier's New Wing Facility in Belfast

The UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, opened Bombardier's new wing manufacturing and assembly facility in Belfast.

Following the addition of close to 1,000 employees to its Northern Ireland workforce over the last two years, Bombardier announced that it will create at least 250 more employment opportunities over the next 12 months, to cater for its expanding aircraft programmes and component repair business. By the end of 2014, this will bring the projected workforce to approximately 6,250.

Bombardier's new 600,000-square-foot facility is producing the wings for the CSeries aircraft, which had its successful maiden flight last month. The wings are made using an innovative carbon-fibre composite technology developed by Bombardier engineers in Northern Ireland. This technology enables both material and aircraft weight savings, which contribute to reduced manufacturing cycle times and reduced fuel burn.

Bombardier also announced that the new wing facility has been certified to Gold level in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system by the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED is the foremost international program for

buildings designed, constructed, and operated for improved environmental and health performance. The facility's sustainable initiatives include building material selection, the extensive use of natural light, energy efficiency, water saving, and indoor environmental quality.

"The CSeries is setting new standards in the commercial aircraft marketplace with its unmatched environmental scorecard, and our employees' expertise and dedication are playing a key role in the success of the program. The prestigious LEED certification of our new Belfast facility also demonstrates that not only are we on the right track with our innovative and environmentally conscious products, we are also delivering on our commitments as a responsible corporate citizen," said Pierre Beaudoin, President and Chief Executive Officer, Bombardier Inc.

"We believe that our advanced com-

posites process enables a step-change in the way aircraft wings are made. The benefits of weight reduction compared to conventional metal wings, and reduced inspection and maintenance activities, are making an important contribution to the CSeries aircraft's success. Bombardier's major investment in the CSeries aircraft programme continues to bring significant benefits to the 200 companies in our UK supply chain as well as to the Northern Ireland and wider UK economies," said Michael Ryan, Vice-President and General Manager, Bombardier Aerospace, Belfast. ■



Bombardier's New Wing Facility in Belfast

Miami Named Qatar Airways 6th U.S. Destination

Qatar Airways, the national carrier for Qatar, has announced Miami to be its sixth destination to the U.S. beginning June 10, 2014. The airline will offer non-stop flights from its hub in Doha four-times per week aboard a Boeing 777.

"The U.S. is a growing market for us and the addition of Miami as a destination and our membership in the oneworld Alliance opens up a multitude of better routes with the Middle East, East Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, and Western Australia to and from the east coast of the U.S.," said Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker.

The city of Miami, located on the

southeastern coast of the State of Florida, is a magnet for international banking and multinational corporations especially interested in Latin America. Known for year-around sun, Miami also attracts visitors to its vibrant tourist and entertainment industries.

"Miami International Airport serves nearly 40 million passengers a year, with approximately 20 million traveling internationally," said Miami-Dade Aviation Department Aviation Director Emilio González. "The addition to Qatar Airways' destinations in the U.S. will help establish Miami as a significant route to the Middle East and beyond. As Qatar



Qatar Airways

Airways' sixth destination in the U.S. and its only service to the Southeast U.S. and Florida, we look forward to welcoming this game-changing new route for MIA."

Qatar Airways currently operates to Chicago, Houston, New York, and Washington D.C., in the U.S. and will add Philadelphia in April 2014. The airline will operate a Boeing 777-200 to Miami with a two-class configuration with 42 seats in Business and 217 seats in Economy. ■

ExecuJet Aviation Group opens general aviation terminal at Bali International Airport

The ExecuJet Aviation Group, has opened a general aviation terminal at Bali International Airport to handle all unscheduled aircraft operations, including customs and immigration. ExecuJet is initially operating from a temporary terminal covering 300m² until a new 3,180m² GA terminal is completed in December 2013. A purpose-built, 65,900m² apron has been constructed adjacent to the new terminal, designed to handle all GA and business aircraft up to narrowbody airliners.

The Bali facility is first terminal to be opened following the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation in June 2012 for ExecuJet to exclusively design, construct and manage GA terminals at up to 13 airports managed by state-owned Indonesian aviation company Angkasa Pura I. This was followed by the signing of a Cooperation Agreement for the manage-

ment of the Bali GA Terminal on 18 June 2013

Graeme Duckworth, managing director of ExecuJet Asia, says: "The launch of our Bali operations is ExecuJet's first step in establishing full operations in Indonesia, which is a strategically important location for our expansion in Southeast Asia. We look forward to providing the same high level of customer service found at our FBOs across the world."

Tommy Soetomo, CEO of Angkasa Pura I, adds: "The new facilities provide a service that is much needed for private jet



Bali International Airport

operators in the region. Partnering with an experienced company such as ExecuJet enables us to provide world-class facilities to handle private aircraft and for passengers to enjoy convenient and efficient passage through customs, immigration and security." ■

New VIP Mi-171A2 and Mi-38 helicopters presented to Chief of the Presidential Property Management Directorate

Russian Helicopters, a subsidiary of Oboronprom, part of Rostec State Corporation, carried out testing of the new Mi-171A2 and Mi-38 helicopters at the National Helicopter Building Centre (NHBC) in Tomilino, Moscow Region. The tests were attended by Vladimir

171A2 and the third round of tests on the transport and passenger Mi-38. The helicopters were demonstrated at the MAKS-2013 airshow in August, and can be used for VIP transport and corporate purposes.

In line with the testing programme, the Mi-171A2 successfully completed testing of its on-board systems and new Klimov BARK-6S-7V automatic engine management system, which increases engine efficiency in various modes of operation. It is expected that the developer will start ground tests and flight-testing of the Mi-171A2 by the end of December 2013. The NHBC is simultaneously carrying

out the latest stage in the third phase of testing for a prototype Mi-38 fitted with Russian-made TV7-117V engines by Klimov, including ground-based testing.

Vladimir Kozhin was briefed on the progress of testing of the new Russian-built helicopters. He praised the potential of the Mi-38 and Mi-171A2, and noted that Russia has always been a leading producer of medium and heavy-lift helicopters. Kozhin stressed that today's Mi-8 series helicopters are the mainstay of the fleet of the Russia Special Flight Detachment, which provides air transport services for senior state officials.

The new multi-role Mi-171A2 and the new transport and passenger Mi-38 are core projects for Russian Helicopters in the medium sector and can be configured in specialised VIP versions.

The Mi-171A2 is the latest addition to the Mi-8/17 series, and combines the long operating experience of these helicopters with the latest technologies. It provides the highest levels of reliability, safety and comfort. ■



Mi171A2

Kozhin, Chief of the Presidential Property Management Directorate. The NHBC is currently carrying out the first round of testing on the medium multi-role Mi-

Generating New Business From Social Media

Peter Bradfield

New business is the Holy Grail for all kinds of enterprise and as the competition to secure new business increases aircraft operators have to review the ways in which they approach and prospect for new customers. Some commentators and opinion formers remain skeptical about the value of Social Media in delivering new business but consider these recent news headlines;



\$500,000 PRIVATE JET FLIGHT BOOKED... VIA iPhone APP FlyMeNow soars to 250k Facebook fans

Headlines like these demonstrate that Social Media has arrived as a source of new business, it can no longer be dismissed as irrelevant. Step back in time and consider the growth of Amazon and iTunes over the last 15 years, and the subsequent demise of the highstreet bookstore and record shop. Can you afford to ignore social media and see your bookings and sources of new business fade away?

The key change that has taken place is that social networks are where consumers engage with each other and their favourite brands. They don't go to Facebook or Twitter to specifically buy things. But, they are very open to discovering, exploring and researching products there. This phase of the buying cycle is known as "consideration" and this is where you

should focus your activities. Driving discovery, building loyalty and getting potential customers deeper into the sales funnel.

The good news is that social selling isn't a clean break from traditional selling; it's an evolutionary step. Social sellers do not need to abandon traditional methods such as email, phone calls or face-to-face meetings. Instead, their time on these traditional channels becomes far more productive when supported by deliberate use of social media. Social selling eliminates some of the most wasteful parts of the traditional sales process (such as cold-calling) and enhances the activities that good salespeople already do to create wins and drive revenue.

It can be argued that the typical passenger on a business aircraft will prefer to keep their life private and not post details on social media. This will be the case in many scenarios but a little bit of digging will help to uncover corporate websites, LinkedIn, twitter and facebook accounts which can provide details of where executives will be travelling, frequently many months in advance of the event. Also don't forget to "look around the edges" the other people on the flight. Who they are, what their involvement is with the



Peter Bradfield

lead passenger, why and where they are travelling. These passengers may provide a whole wealth of information via social media accounts that can lead to accurate predictions of future travel requirements.

Today's business purchasers openly express their aspirations and their needs through social media. For attentive salespeople, this information is manna from heaven. It allows them to discover shared interests or relationships that can turn cold calls into warm introductions. In addition to empathy, social media fosters insight. Because online social profiles make the customer's business needs, and the seller's subject knowledge, more transparent, the two parties can build a relationship through valuable exchanges of information, not just idle chit-chat. And from there opportunities can be found to present flight solutions that neatly fit the new client's requirements. ■



Gulfstream G650 Sets Around-the-World Speed Record

The Gulfstream G650 completed the fastest westbound, around-the-world flight for a non-supersonic aircraft. The ultra-long-range, ultra-large-cabin company flagship circled the globe in 41 hours, 7 minutes, establishing a world record in the C-1.1 aircraft class. The record was officially certified by the National Aeronautic Association and the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale in September.

The G650, the fastest certified civilian aircraft, recorded an average speed of 568.5 miles per hour (915 kilometers per hour) on the journey, claiming 22 city-pair speed records in the process. The G650 now has a total of 38 records since setting its first (Burbank, Calif., to Savannah) in January 2011. "This is a momentous occasion for Gulfstream and business aviation," said Larry Flynn, president, Gulfstream. "This was an awesome display of the G650's speed and range, two performance capabilities that help make this aircraft the industry standard since entering service in 2012."

The G650's 20,310-nautical-mile (37,614-kilometer) around-the-world journey started and ended in San Diego, with stops in Guam, Dubai and Cape Verde. Each leg was flown at Mach 0.90, the standard high-speed cruise setting for the aircraft. Five pilots shared crew duties over the four legs of the journey. The record attempt kicked off at 9:08 p.m. local time on July 1, with the G650 leaving San Diego's Brown Field Municipal Airport. After crossing most of the Pacific Ocean, the aircraft landed at Guam International Airport in 10 hours, 29 minutes. The G650 covered the second leg — Guam to Dubai World Central-Al Maktoum International Airport in 10 hours; the third leg — Dubai to Cape Verde's Amílcar Cabral International Airport — in 8 hours, 52 minutes; and the final leg — Cape Verde to Brown Field in San Diego — in 10 hours, 10 minutes.



The Gulfstream flight crew for the G650's around-the-world record. From left: Tom Horne, Bud Ball, Eric Parker, Ross Oetjen and John McGrath.

The cumulative ground time for the three refueling stops was approximately 1.5 hours. "The aircraft performed flawlessly, which is what we expected," said pilot-in-command Tom Horne. "It is a tremendous thrill to be a part of a once-in-a-lifetime experience like this."

EVA Air takes delivery of its first Airbus A321 equipped with Sharklets

EVA Air of Taiwan has taken delivery of its first Sharklet equipped A321 aircraft, on lease from GE Capital Aviation Services. The aircraft was handed over during a ceremony in

is the first of eight A321s with Sharklets that will be operated by EVA Air under lease agreement from GECAS.

"We are very pleased to be Taiwan's first operator bringing the latest version of the cost efficient A321 equipped with Sharklets," Chang Kuo Wei, Chairman of EVA Air said. "Thanks to our new Sharklet-equipped A321s, we will continue to offer superior value and service to our customers."



Airbus A321

Hamburg attended by Chang Kuo Wei, Chairman of EVA Air, and Norman Liu, President and CEO of GECAS. This A321

are pleased to be partnering with EVA Air on their fleet expansion and the introduction of the fuel saving Sharklets. It is of particular importance

to us to have the most modern aircraft in our portfolio and the A321 equipped with Sharklets is a perfect fit," said Norman Liu, President and CEO of GECAS.

"The Sharklets deliver up to four per cent fuel burn reduction on longer sectors, and this translates into impressive cost savings," said John Leahy, Chief Operating Officer, Customers. "In addition, EVA Air's passengers can fly assured that they are travelling on board the world's most efficient single aisle aircraft."

Sharklets are made from light-weight composites and are 2.4 meters tall. They are an option on new-build A320 Family aircraft and standard on all members of the new A320neo family. They offer operators up to four per cent fuel burn reduction on longer range sectors and provide the flexibility of either adding an additional 100 nautical miles range or increased payload capability of up to 450 kilograms.

Czech Airlines Will Newly Connect Bratislava With Prague And Košice

Czech Airlines will add two new scheduled flights between Prague and Bratislava and between Košice and Bratislava to this year's winter flight schedule. The operation on both flight connections will start on 11 December 2013; sale of air tickets for the new flights will be started tomorrow in all distribution channels. For both airlines, Czech Airlines will dispatch two return flights every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. From the 2014 summer season, the offer will be extended to two flight connections daily with the exception of Saturday. Czech Airlines will thus return, in the year when we commemorate the 90th anniversary of the company establishment and commencement of operation, to its historically first airline Prague – Bratislava. The Václav Havel Airport Prague will again get a direct connection with the capital of Slovakia.

"Slovakia is a traditional and natural market for Czech Airlines that we would like to be more active on. The company went through the three-year restructuring plan within the framework of which a number of unpopular but necessary austerity measures had to be implemented. During this time, changes occurred both in demand and in Slovakian air traffic market that we have been monitoring for a long time. Nowadays we can provide passengers with products that are missing in the market but are being increasingly demanded. That is the main reason for opening new flight connections of Czech Airlines in Slovakia," said Jozef Sinčák, CSA Vice-President for Sales and Marketing.

Morning and evening flight connection on the most requested days, i.e. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, as well as the departure and arrival times of the new scheduled airline between Prague

and Bratislava are adjusted particularly to the needs of travelling salesmen. Departures from Prague are planned for 6:35 and 17:30, return flights from Bratislava are planned for 10:10 and 21:05. This airline will be served by turbo-propeller airplanes of the ATR 42 or 72 type, the flight between Prague and Bratislava lasts only one hour. Due to large reconstruction of the D1 highway, the new flight connection between Prague

and Bratislava may be an interesting alternative to the passenger car transport between both capital cities. Prices of return air tickets to Bratislava start at 79 EUR including all airport charges.

More connections and connecting flights in the 2014 summer season

The airline between Bratislava and Prague connects to a number of Czech Airlines flights, for example to Barcelona, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Kiev, Milan, Moscow, Nice, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Warsaw, but also to Seoul which will be appreciated particularly by managers of many South Korean companies operating in Slovakia. "In the 2014 summer season, Czech Airlines will increase the number of return flights between Prague and Bratislava to two flights daily on all working days; during weekends, Sunday evening flight connection will be available. From April 2014, we will extend the number of connecting flights, particularly to destinations in the Russian Federation,

for example to Yekaterinburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Perm and Ufa, but also to Zurich or Geneva. Prices of transfer return tickets from Bratislava to destinations in



Košice

Western Europe will start at 179 EUR, prices of tickets to destinations in Russia and Ukraine will start at 279 EUR including all charges. Passengers who want to fly from Bratislava to Seoul may pay as little as 642 EUR," added Stanislav Zeman, CSA Executive Manager for Sales.

From Košice to Bratislava (and vice versa) in 50 minutes

Together with the new airline between Prague and Bratislava, Czech Airlines introduce also domestic air flight connection between Košice and the capital of Slovakia. During the current winter season, morning and evening flights will be available every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. From the end of March 2014, Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday flights will be added to the offer. Flights from Bratislava to Košice are planned for 7:50 and 18:45, return flights for 9:00 and 19:55. The flight will last 50 minutes. Prices of return air tickets will start at 99 EUR including all airport charges.

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