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AVIATION TIMES

AUTUMN2016

**INTERVIEW WITH
JOSÉ EDUARDO
COSTAS**

**CEPA EXPO
ANNOUNCES
2016 DATES**



**GULFSTREAM SELLS
FINAL G150, MARKS
END OF 10-YEAR
PRODUCTION RUN**

**GARETH DANKERS VIEW
OF BUSINESS AVIATION
IN CEE**

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the **PEGASUS**
AWARD *the story*
Interview with behind the event
Antonia Lukacinova



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“The belief that business aviation is purely an exclusive and luxury driven way of traveling is changing in a global basis. We see this as an increasing trend,” thinks José Eduardo Costas, Head of Sales for Pre Owned Aircraft from Embraer Executive Jets. Three quarters of the 2016 are over and we were talking how Jose Eduardo sees European business aviation market.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BUSINESS JET FLEET IN EUROPE

- Today there are approximately 20,950 business jets in operation around the world.
- Europe is the 2nd biggest market, behind US only.
- There are around 2,870 bizjets based in European countries (14% of total).
- The Top 5 European fleet correspond to 47% of total business jets in region:
Germany: 15,0% | UK: 12,0% | France : 8,0% | Switzerland: 6,2% | Austria: 6,0%
- Today there are more than 1035 Embraer business jets in operation around the world:
1.5% of EEJ fleet, equivalent to 16 jets, are currently based in Central East Europe:
 - Czech Republic: 9 Embraer jets (8 Legacy 600/650 and 1 Phenom 100).
 - Poland: 5 Embraer jets (2 Legacy 600, 2 Phenom 100 and 1 Phenom 300).
 - Romania: 1 Embraer jet (Phenom 100).
 - Slovak Republic: 1 Embraer Jet (Legacy 650).

Source: Jetnet database (base region). September 2016.

What are the key issues facing European business aviation in 2016?

The European business aviation remains the second largest regional market in the world in terms of new aircraft sales and pre-owned aircraft transactions. However, the region is taking longer to recover since the financial crisis, 8 years ago. Some of the growth fundamentals are yet to recover such as the current traffic levels, residual values of pre-owned aircraft, the economic growth and political stability perspectives.

Currently, business aviation traffic in Europe is pretty much the same as last year, eastern region doing better than west and south. However, there is a good recovery track in total movements of light jets, especially under charter operations. The charter consolidation

is still ongoing and hopefully will help to optimize the European fleet and increase utilization, leading to a growing opportunities for aircraft replacements and additions. There are however a good number of “pockets of growth” where GDP will increase above EU average including some countries in Central Europe. This is encouraging news for business aviation, of course. Also, we believe business aviation service models are about to reinvent their selves. Last time it happened was more than 15 years ago with major fractional ownership companies in US, mainly. The advent of new, more efficient aircraft models, new fleet management tools and services as health monitoring systems may be enablers of a new era, where fleet efficiency will be key to meet demand for shared

economy driven business models. In longer term, some of the business aviation orthodoxies such as its exclusivity appeal are at a cross roads. On the other hand, the ability to deliver final user benefits such as more speed, comfort and the flexibility in reaching final point-to-point destinations, continue to leverage its value position when compared to other transportation modes, and even when compared to current airlines services in major hubs.

With uncertainty in the financial markets how do you think this impact on European business aviation?

Uncertainty in financial markets affects all sort of business including business aviation. However, it looks like this has

become the new norm since 2008, so we believe that the industry as a whole is adapting to such condition as well as the users and customers of business aviation, translated into more judicious investment decisions, either for replacement or for acquiring new or used aircraft. At the same time, the demand of people that need to fly to a location with poor schedule services or that are not offered by commercial aviation, entices the creation of different business models. Even with uncertainty in the financial markets, the Economic growth in Europe remains stable overall at 1.9 per cent (prior-year period: 1.9 per cent). In addition, the funding sources for aircraft acquisition has remained satisfactory. We have seen new financial entities interested in entering the aircraft financing and leasing market and some of them are European.

The rapid growth in the use of drones and the many purposes for which they are being used, is having a dramatic increase in the number of incidences of near misses with aircraft. How would you like to see the use of drones regulated in European airspace? We are not involved in the drone business, however, as already said before, Embraer is always in favor of initiatives to increase safety. Technology development will continue of course and, as such, it will challenge established systems and infrastructure that on its turn

will need to react and adapt. The drones markets and applications are in their infancy and will have to be followed closely by regulators and associations.

European business aviation growth has remained relatively static in recent years, what would you suggest as a solution to change this situation?

The low utilization of the European bizav fleet over the last years has triggered a number of changes towards fleet "right sizing". The belief that business aviation is purely an exclusive and luxury driven way of traveling is changing in a global basis. We see this as an increasing trend.

First we see space for charter consolidation, where a reduced number of operators but with a larger fleet can rationalize administrative and operating costs. The next challenge is to rationalize the fleet, either because some aircraft may be too old or the new and forthcoming operational requirements will demand considerable investments depending upon the aircraft model and age. On the user side we also see a trend that the decision to fly a specific aircraft from point A to B is being taken by using internet based apps instead of traditional calls to charter companies and brokers. Technology is allowing information and decision literally at fingertips. Trip price comparisons are becoming the norm and this will likely allow a quicker and more efficient

use of the fleet and then bring more opportunities for fleet growth.

How you see European business aviation in five and ten years' time?

Since business travelers are all about time savings, more and more executives and entrepreneurs will start viewing private aviation as an insurance against many service-related disruptions, common to commercial aviation services. Moreover, the price to fly a private jet is getting closer to the cost to fly in a first class. The "shared economy" phenomena will certainly lead business aviation to rediscover itself in a large scale, thus involving all of its ecosystem, from OEM's to operators and final users.

Do you believe Brexit will have an impact on European Business Aviation and if so will it be a positive or negative impact?

In the short term perhaps, as uncertainty always impacts any business. UK is a very important market and will always continue to be. We expect that all the consequences of Brexit in regards to aircraft operations within Europe, aircraft taxes, etc. are all defined and understood the soonest. Having said that, we continue to have strong leads and prospects in the region even after the Brexit announcement.



FBO RIGA

Opening new Fronts for Riga Airport

With an opening of an ultra-modern business aviation center in September 2015, FBO RIGA continues to push for better customer experience. The center is the biggest in the Baltics and the EU. It highlights the growing significance of Riga Airport as a business aviation hub for the Scandinavia and Baltic region.

The construction started in 2013 at a cost 12.5 million Euros. The business center has a 1200 square meter business aviation terminal and a 8400 square meter heated hangar for both fixed wing and rotor craft. There is an adjacent car park, an apron with parking stands for private business jets, and a helipad.

FBO RIGA co-owners Roman Starkov and Leonid Gorodnitsky stated that the company undertook this development with the huge potential of Latvia as an aviation hub in mind. There was a need for these services owing to the geographical location of the country. Latvia is strategically located and is accessible by flights from Asia en route to southern and western Europe.

Range of services

The opening of the business aviation center has enabled FBO RIGA to offer ground handling services such as terminal services for passenger boarding and landing, hangar for fixed and rotor aircraft parking, apron parking for flight stop over servicing, crew facilities for R&R, catering for passenger and crew, de-icing and anti-icing, full service by a fully equipped service station, aircraft cleaning and washing. Flights can access full ground handling services including refueling, watering, loading of meals and drinks, parking of aircraft in the hangar, and cabin cleaning.

Passenger services include passport and customs clearance, flight check-in and more.

Private jet owners have access to station and store their aircraft at the aviation center. The company claims to have a personalized business service for private jets.

Increased flights

Within the first 8 months of opening the aviation center, FBO RIGA handled over 1000 flights and

2000 passengers. The terminal is able to handle both light aircraft such as Premier 1 and heavy jets like the Boeing 707. There flights to major cities in west Europe and Russia; Moscow, London, St. Petersburg, Prague, Tallinn, Kiev, Nice, Geneva, Vienna, Berlin, Zurich. Flights from central Asian countries have also been landing at the airport. The first 12 months saw an increase of 35% in flights. 85% of these were cargo flights showing the trade potential of this hub.

Awards

In March 2016, FBO RIGA was nominated for two awards. The first was New Construction award in recognition of the logistics and production the hangar (the first prize), and the New Construction award for the design of Public Facilities for the boutique terminal (the third prize).

In April 2016 FBO RIGA was honored in Prague with Sapphire Pegasus Business Aviation Awards, for Handler / Service Provider / FBO as the best FBO in Europe. The nomination was done by over 2000 professionals online.

Modern aviation hub

FBO RIGA Center also holds international meetings, presentations, and events. The center has all the trappings of a modern aviation hub. The hangar can easily hold 5 Boeing Jets, or 9 Gulfstream 550 business jets, or 20 Learjet-60 aircraft.

The waiting lounges have been tastefully



done. The interior design was done by Zane Tetere, one of the most successful designers of Latvia. The ground floor of the building comprises six comfortable sitting areas, a VIP Lounge and a VIP meeting room, a bar, and an art gallery. The first floor of the terminal houses a conference room and offices. A separate space is occupied by FCG OPS, a certified 24/7 flight operations control center, supporting more than 90 daily flights to and from the airport.

Improved efficiency

Before putting up the new facilities ground operations per hour took 1 hour, during 40 minutes. This was reduced to 30 minutes! Connecting flights from Asia to Europe or America have found a convenient stop over for both passenger and cargo flights, clearing ground handling in less than one hour of an aircraft being landed. This is a service possible only in smaller airports.

Flight crew have been able to handle tasks easier as aircraft can taxi up to the terminal for easier loading, boarding and refueling. Ground personnel have

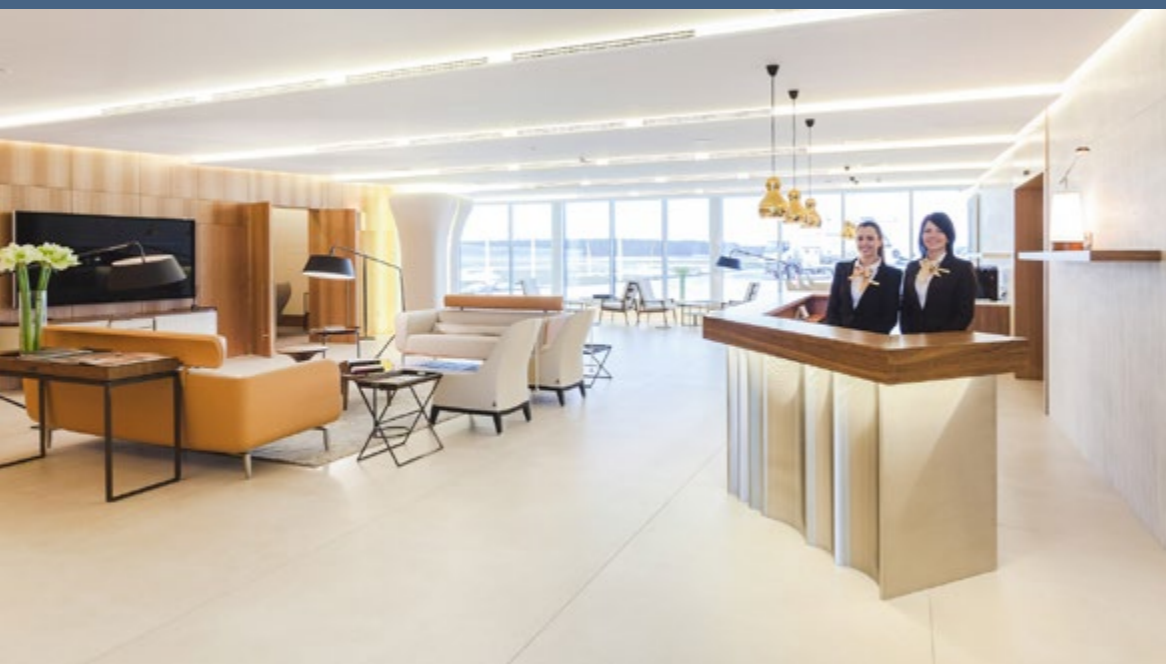
managed to reduce the handling time per aircraft with this facility.

The lounges have been separated for security and convenience. Flight crews have access to their own lounge and can hold briefings in meeting rooms. There are also service rooms for refreshing and relaxing.

Planned development

As part of better service delivery for everyone; passengers, ground and flight crew, there is a plan to open a hotel. The hotel will ease passenger flight changes and also offer better service to off-duty crew.

Aircraft maintenance services have been improved by opening of a fully equipped service station in January 2016. The station is manned SOLINAIR, a certified provider of maintenance for aircraft.



CESSNA CELEBRATES SEGMENT LEADERSHIP WITH 5,000TH CITATION LIGHT JET DELIVERY

Cessna Aircraft Company today announced that it has recently delivered the 5,000th Citation light business jet, a Citation M2, to Helitrip Charter LLP, which is leasing the aircraft to Catreus Ltd., an established charter operator based in the U.K. This milestone demonstrates Textron Aviation's leadership in the light jet segment.

To celebrate this milestone delivery, Textron Aviation, Helitrip and Catreus held a special ceremony at the Textron Aviation headquarters in Wichita.

"We are thrilled Catreus will be operating another M2, as the M2's excellent combination of range and efficiency will be a great addition to their fleet to help meet their growing customer base", said Kriya Shortt, senior vice president, Sales and Marketing. "Cessna's innovative spirit transformed the light jet segment, and we continue to demonstrate our leadership in this segment by bringing products to market that our customers want and need. The 5,000th Citation light jet delivery reiterates that our company remains the indisputable leader with decades of proven performance, reliability and versatility."


Catreus currently manages and operates a mixed fleet of aircraft, which includes the Cessna Citation Mustang,

Citation M2, Citation Bravo, Citation Excel, Citation XLS and Citation XLS+ business jets. Catreus' combined aircraft fleet now operates approximately 3,000 charter hours a year.



"We are delighted to add another Citation M2 to our fleet. After bringing the first M2 into the U.K. last year, we have seen an increase in demand for the aircraft. Adding a second M2 to the fleet will now allow us to meet the demand," said Cy Williams, CEO, Catreus Ltd. "We have recently been


approved as the first operator to operate the M2 out of London City, which means our entire fleet is now London City approved. We look forward to our continued relationship with Textron Aviation."

Cessna entered the light jet segment in 1972 when the company delivered its first Citation. Since then, the Citation light jets have continued to lead the light jet segment, to include the Citation I, Citation II, Citation Bravo, Citation S/II, Citation V, Citation Ultra, Citation Encore, Citation Encore+ and the CJ family. Cessna's current light jets – the Mustang, M2, CJ3+ and CJ4 – are all single-pilot certified and ideal for corporate, charter or private use. 

TALLINN AIRPORT AWARDED TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS OPERATOR

The gala reception held on the evening of 5 October as part of Tallinn Enterprise Day saw the announcement of the winners of the Tallinn Enterprise Awards for 2016. The competition is designed to recognise and reward business operators and all enterprising people. Awards were presented


to the most outstanding business operators in seven categories. The title of Responsible Business Operator was awarded to Tallinn Airport. Celebrating its 80th anniversary this year, Tallinn Airport is marked out by its systematic and consistent approach to sustainability and its skilful integration

thereof into its business model. Over the last year a great deal of attention has been turned to customer service, cooperation with partner companies and reducing the airport's ecological footprint. 

GULFSTREAM SELLS FINAL G150, MARKS END OF 10-YEAR PRODUCTION RUN

Gulfstream Aerospace Corp. announced it has sold the last Gulfstream G150, marking the end of the mid-size aircraft's more than 10-year production run. The final G150 will be delivered to a customer in mid-2017. "The G150 has had a distinguished history, spanning more than a decade," said Mark Burns, president, Gulfstream, "and it remains an important part of our business. Our product support organization will continue to provide industry-leading support to our G150 owners and ensure there are enough parts, tooling, sustaining engineering, and personnel available to support the worldwide G150 fleet. Our Field and Airborne Support Teams (FAST) will still use two G150 aircraft to transport parts and technicians to our operators in the Americas and the Caribbean." The G150 entered service in August 2006 as a replacement for the G100. The new aircraft's performance immediately put it at the top of the mid-size class of business jets. The versatile aircraft has the longest range at the fastest speed in its class.

Gulfstream's fleet of nearly 120 G150s comprises operators in the U.S., Canada, Central America, South America, Europe and Asia. The G150 has a dispatch reliability rate of 99.83 percent and is certified in more than 45 countries, including the U.S., Brazil, Canada, China, England, Germany, Israel and Switzerland.


"Our long-range plan calls for us to focus on the super mid-size and large-cabin markets," Burns said. "We have an excellent mid-cabin offering in the G280. Since it entered service in late 2012, we have delivered nearly 100 of those aircraft, demonstrating the appeal of incorporating large-cabin-type capabilities into a super mid-size aircraft." 



FL TECHNICS ADDS AIRBUS A330 TO ITS CAMO

FL Technics, a global provider of one-stop-shop aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul services, is further expanding the range of its Continuous Airworthiness Management capabilities by adding Airbus A330 aircraft type to its EASA Part M approval.

The updated Part M was issued following a successful audit conducted by EASA earlier this year. The new approval enables FL Technics to offer Airbus A330 operators and owners a broad variety of engineering services, including Airworthiness Directive and Service Bulletin compliance control and their implementation, as well as aircraft maintenance programme development, technical records management, aircraft audits, and other services. FL Technics' CAMO capabilities also cover A320 Family, Boeing 737 NG/CL, Boeing 767, Embraer EMB 135/145 and ERJ 170, as well as recently added SSJ100.

"Many of our clients operate or plan to add wide-body aircraft to their fleets, hence, we are delighted to have the ability to offer them quality CAMO support not only for narrow, but wide body aircraft as well. With over 1200 of Airbus A330s in operation across the globe, we are ready to support airlines from any region and help them in ensuring more efficient A330 maintenance planning and airworthiness management," explains Zilvinas Lapinskas, the CEO of FL Technics. 



Gareth Danker, Director of Sales and Marketing at Euro Jet, one of the world's leading provider of flight and ground support services, recently took time to share with AVIATION Times his view of business aviation in central Europe.

European business aviation growth has remained relatively static in recent years, what would you suggest as a solution to change this situation?

The static growth has not necessarily affected us. Euro Jet has seen continued record growth over the past eight years. We have not seen flat growth, we have had record growth each and every year. We have all seen the EU crisis

in Southern Europe, especially Greece, issues with Russian sanctions and still the continent has remained relatively stable. Therefore, maintaining flat growth is a good thing considering all the challenges that European business aviation has faced. What do you see as the biggest threat to the future of business aviation in Europe? We do not really see there to be any major threats.

Talking about the future of European aviation market, how do you see European business aviation in five and ten years' time?

We see it getting stronger. We think that the Spanish, Portuguese, Greek markets will continue to improve and position themselves well. In our opinion, UK will - while they have challenges - will come out OK once everything is finalized. We remain positive. The German aviation sector continues to be strong and we feel that it will continue to grow as well as the Scandinavian market. We see great potential over the next years and further growth in this industry.

Where do you see future growth coming from? Which regions and sectors of business?

As a ground support company we see most of our business coming from U.S., Europe and Asia while we all know the Chinese market has been not as strong as it has been anticipated years ago, but we still do business in China and

with Asian companies. U.S. clients are very strong and European customers continue to strive despite Russian sanctions, Brexit and the struggles of Greek financial crisis.

How secure do you think European aircraft operators are?

Anyone who has been in private aviation knows that nothing is ever secure when it comes to stability of an aircraft operator. Very much depends on the investment the owner wants to make in the aircraft. Security also depends on how well they will market themselves and properly price trips and be as financially stable as possible. This is a very competitive industry on the charter side and it requires some very savvy financial decisions to sustain a profitable operation.

Do you believe Brexit will have an impact on European Business Aviation and if so will it be a positive or negative impact?

That depends on what the final agreement will look like. We can consider this issue upon solely immigration, or based upon both immigration and economic restrictions and limiting to what is currently a relatively free market in UK. If it does restrict the free market, then yes, there could be a negative impact on UK operators flying freely to EU. They will need permits; they will be paying more... Such events could hurt the British economy and in turn impact business aviation in UK, from airport standpoint and less aircraft standpoint.



EURO JET OPENS NEW LOUNGES IN KARLOVY VARY AND DUBROVNIK

Euro Jet announced the opening of a new VIP complimentary crew lounge in the Czech Republic's premier spa resort town of Karlovy Vary and Dubrovnik, Croatia.

The very large lounge in Karlovy Vary includes comfortable couches, a private relaxation area, full work station with wifi, flat screen television, and assorted snacks and beverages. The spacious lounge will offer crews the option to get work done or relax before, after, or in between flights.

This is Euro Jet's third lounge located in the Czech Republic. Euro Jet also has two lounges at Prague's Vaclav Havel Airport.

Dubrovnik crew lounge provides crews with a comfortable air conditioned environment along with assorted cold beverages and snacks. This was very much appreciated during the hot Summer months when Dubrovnik is busiest. The lounge also has comfortable armchairs, a full work station with wifi, and a flat screen television.

"Euro Jet has continued to recognize the demand throughout its core region for proper crew facilities. Our goal is to keep building them in the future," says Gareth Danker, Director of Sales and Marketing at Euro Jet.

CEPA EXPO 2016 COMING IN FEW WEEKS

This year CEPA Expo has been extended to three days to include the career day on Tuesday 18th October. The concept of this day is to introduce young people to the world of aviation and the opportunities there are for career development. Networking with delegates will be encouraged to allow delegates and students to discuss the possibilities and the skillset and abilities needed to develop a successful career in business aviation.

Another new addition are workshops. EASA Brush up workshop is organized by JAA promises to review and discuss recent developments in EASA regulations and Russian workshop provided by RUBAA and its representative is dedicated to aviation activity in Russia. The Russian business aviation market is of a great interest for many European companies and the workshop offers a perfect opportunity to meet with representatives of Russian operators, airports, service providers, brokers.

A key element not to be forgotten is the generous hospitality of the Czech hosts. As with previous CEPA Expos this year's program includes a series of networking and hospitality events. These are always a very popular part of CEPA Expo and give delegates the chance to enjoy the finer aspects of Czech hospitality while still networking and exchanging ideas late into the night.

Once again CEPA Expo takes place in the stunning surroundings of Prague Castle and has the official patronage of the Czech Ministries of Transport, Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade. The event is also supported by the City of Prague, the Czech Chamber of Commerce and the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic.

RUSSIAN HELICOPTERS CEO ALEXANDER MIKHEEV'S CONTRACT EXTENDED FOR 5 YEARS

Russian Helicopters has announced its CEO Alexander Mikheev's contract extension until 2021. The decision was made in September.

"During the three years under Alexander Mikheev's guidance, Russian Helicopters has shown constant growth of all key financial indicators. In 2015, annual revenue increased by 29.5% to RUB 220.0 billion, and profit increased by 103.7% to RUB 42.2 billion. Presently, despite the turbulent conditions of the global helicopter market, Alexander Mikheev has a task of helping not only to strengthen the positions of Russian Helicopters in the medium and heavy aircraft niches, which are traditional for the Russian helicopter industry, but also to enter new, prospective markets in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East with new offers. I am sure that Alexander Mikheev will meet these challenges," said the CEO of Rostec Corporation Sergey Chemezov.

"Our main strategic task was and is to create high-tech helicopter industry in Russia capable of meeting all internal demands for helicopters and capture the maximum possible share of the global market. We are currently paying special attention to the promotion of civil helicopters, both on domestic and foreign markets, as well as actively developing our system of after-sales service. During the first 6 months of 2016 the revenues from after-sales service increased by almost one-third as compared to the previous period of 2015," said Russian Helicopters CEO Alexander Mikheev.



AIRBUS' BELUGA XL TRANSPORTER CONTINUES TO TAKE SHAPE

When Airbus' Beluga XL oversized cargo airlifter enters service, it will have the same visual appeal as its well-loved predecessor – the A300-600ST Super Transporter, more commonly known as the Beluga ST – thanks to the design of its nose and main cargo door.

The whale-like face that earned the original Beluga its nickname is iconic – however it wasn't always certain this distinctive feature would be carried over to the new-generation Beluga XL, which was launched in 2014 based on Airbus' highly-versatile A330 jetliner. In contrast, the A300-600ST is derived from the company's shorter-fuselage A300. Favourable aesthetics played no major role in the Beluga XL's "facial" design, rather it was a combination of cost targets and payload and ground infrastructure requirements. "To avoid excessive development costs, we re-use the nose landing gear from our base aircraft, the A330," said Yael Marion, nose fuselage and main cargo door programme leader at STELLIA Aerospace – which is one of the aircraft's major aerostructure suppliers. "This

impacts the cockpit position, which is even lower than on the current Beluga ST."

This was a real challenge, but Marion is confident his team's work packages will be ready on time to feed the Toulouse, France final integration line. "There is still some way to go, but we're all proud of our achievements so far," Marion added. "At the end of August 2016, more than 50 per cent of the elementary parts had been built and 15 per cent of the assembly had been completed." This on-schedule development was underscored by Bertrand George, Head of Beluga XL programme, who said that Beluga XL assembly activity on the final integration line should begin by the end of 2016.

Starting in mid-2019, the Beluga XL will gradually replace the exist-

ing five-member Beluga ST fleet – which is used for carrying complete sections of Airbus aircraft from different production sites around Europe to the final assembly lines in Toulouse, France and Hamburg, Germany. The fleet had 5,000 total flight hours in 2012 and that number is projected to be 10,000 in 2017.

Hervé Demoinet, who is leading the team preparing the Beluga XL for entry into service, noted that the Belugas – both the ST and XL – will play a major role in future production ramp-ups. "Both versions will operate in parallel for a while, but we'll begin phasing out the ST by the end of 2020," he says. "Thanks to the XL's larger volume, we can transport the same capacity with 30 per cent less flight hours."

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SAPPHIRE *the* PEGASUS AWARD *the story behind the event*

After the inauguration of the Sapphire Pegasus Award during a fabulous Gala Event in Prague, we sat down with Antonia Lukacinova to find out how it all came about. Antonia, the CEO of Media Tribune marketing communications agency is the brainchild of the Award and has worked tirelessly and determinedly to conceive this act and bring it to the stage.

Why a new Award?

For one, I was actively involved myself in business aviation in CEE region for quite a number of years. I have seen and experienced the exhaustive efforts that companies in this region had to make in order to achieve their targets, profitability, increase in fleets, and increase their customer base. Most of these companies were working with limited budgets that often prevented them from having their own marketing or communication team, or even just one person in

charge of creating a presentation, a promotion, or a public relations campaign which was needed to compete in a global business environment. An international award could be a solution to recognize and demonstrate their accomplishments. I felt that it was important and about time to create a way to celebrate their success.

Secondly, there still exists a gap between the West, where business aviation was developed from the early days on, and the East that entered the market much later.

Companies from Central and Eastern European countries learned fast. To build up a company in 5-10 years with a fleet of 5-7 aircraft is an accomplishment. Yet, in the marketplace, one is compared with companies who have grown their business over a period of 20 or more years. I'm not saying that it is unfair, but one would should apply some relativity and appreciate the achievements. I felt that the Sapphire Pegasus Award could also be a fair chance for smaller or younger companies to prove



themselves. Many of them are truly unique because of their scope of work, range of services, composition of professional teams, or other reasons.

I strongly believe that there are many companies who are actually great, but on an international level one is just not aware of them. They do deserve a form of recognition for their outstanding performances. That is why I created the Sapphire Pegasus Award.

How did you select the Board of Advice and decide on the nomination procedures?

My aim is to provide an optimal way of objective judging. Therefore, the finale score of the winners is the result of the initial online public voting and those results were then combined with the votes of the Advisory Board judges. The Advisory Board was comprised of a team of business aviation experts from different segments of the industry. They had the final word in determining the Award winners. I invited judges from aviation associations as they are in close contact with aviation companies according to the regions that their organizations represent. They are often most aware of company and individual activities and performances in their region. Then, I also wanted to invite aviation professionals with insights from different perspectives. So, I decided for some media representatives who gather background intelligence and facts for their activities.

Why did you choose a limited geographical area? Will that be changed in the future? Will the event remain in Prague in the foreseeable future?

I believed that it was important to find relevant areas where one can compare the performances of different types of companies in a geographical area where these companies are mostly active. We all know that the USA is a completely different market with other characteristics. The Far East and especially China are very promising, so, I can envision that in the future we may also cover that region once we have more experiences with Chinese companies.

Initially, I have considered other locations than just Prague. However, when comparing the benefits of

several potential locations, I came to the conclusion that Prague is right for many reasons. I consider it the Heart of Europe with very good airline connections to a large number of destinations.

Why a special award for Russia?

Russia is a key market and in the focus of many companies. Many of them are exploring how to enter the market, do their business, establish their subsidiaries, or are looking for partners for cooperation. Many companies are confronted with problems to build a workable partnership in the Russian market. From my own experience of doing business with clients in Russia, one was often faced with obstacles by banks, insurance companies, and other parties. A major issue is the lack of proper communication and the understanding of different cultures. I believe that with the Sapphire Pegasus Award, we may bring together business parties from different markets and enable the creation of trustworthy relationships. It was one more reason to involve the RUBAA business aviation association. With a special Award for the Russian market, we wanted to create awareness and also present the outstanding performances of hard working teams, that are facing many different problems in day to day activities in comparison to Western companies. I wanted to show and prove that it is time to change the bias of many western companies that the Russian market and its businesses are unreliable. On the contrary, there are hardworking individuals and groups who do perform well and have great ideas, but often have to “fight against everything and everybody” to move their dreams forward.

Will there be additional awards in the future. What about scholarships?

We will indeed add some categories next year; we are always open for new ideas. This year we included “Social Media” because it is gaining importance as a communication tool and an award for that particular category is an encouragement for optimal applications. Scholarships were on our mind but is was just a bit too early since we were still in negotiations

with companies. I’m sure we will offer that option soon since most companies are interested to support training for students and those starting a career in aviation.

Why did you name it the Sapphire Pegasus Award; why not gold? Why a flying horse and not an eagle?

For me Sapphire is the symbol of a blue sky. A blue sky means good conditions for flying. Thus, I feel that Sapphire represents a positive message. The blue sapphire is also one of the classic precious gemstones which was important for the award name; to keep it simple, It’s classic and symbolizing preciousness. The Blue Sapphire is actually also my favorite gemstone.

Is being a nominee already a mentionable recognition; just like being an Oscar nominee?

I believe it is. At the gala event every nominee has received a certificate that confirmed the nomination and category.

Now that the first Award Event has proven to be a tremendous success what do you expect in the future?

I will continue to work for close cooperation with the leaders of the industry. It should result in the support of start-up companies, educational developments, exchange of experiences between companies, bringing about new ventures and cooperation on international level, and opening the door for new business opportunities for companies.

There is no doubt that the Sapphire Pegasus Award will become an institution of its own. Antonia Lukacinova should be commended for conceiving and realizing this new valuable asset to the business aviation industry.

The next Sapphire Pegasus Award Ceremony will be held on May 5, 2017 in Prague.





The Complete guide to Business Aircraft & Helicopters

Jet Book
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