

23 September 2014

Opening to the East - via Budapest Airport

(Text prepared by Budapest Airport)

Whilst turning Hungary into the gateway to Europe remains a priority, Budapest Airport is a key partner of the government, in the international aviation market. The development of the Hungarian economy provides a good basis and demand for the cargo airlines. These were amongst the most important points emphasized by László Szabó, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Trade, in his opening address at the 15th Freighters and Belly Cargo World Conference in Budapest.

"79% of Hungarian exports still flow to the European Union, we do not want to turn our backs on this market at all, but as an open economy, we want to be multi-faceted," said László Szabó at the Hotel Marriott in Budapest, where air cargo experts from all over the world are meeting for the global conference. "Whilst the development of the Hungarian economy is exceeding expectations, it is natural that we are seeking new markets. It is clear to everyone that in the coming years, rapid economic growth and expanding markets will be found in the Far East, Central Asia and the surrounding region" added Mr. Szabó.

This is the first time that the Freighters and Belly Cargo World Conference is being held in the Eastern European region; the Hungarian capital was chosen as the venue following a successful bid by Budapest Airport. The air cargo market is also starting to find its feet after the global financial crisis, as shown by the fact that after several years of stagnation, cargo traffic is now increasing at Budapest Airport, reaching 92,000 tonnes in 2013. In addition to the cargo airlines, the integrator companies (DHL, TNT, UPS, and FedEx) and the full service carriers which, depending on available capacity, transport air cargo in the cargo holds of passenger airliners (hence the term 'belly cargo'), also have a share of the market.

Over the past few years, Budapest Airport has made substantial efforts to develop the cargo market, and brought new partners to Budapest, such as Turkish Cargo and Azerbaijani carrier Silk Way West. Cargolux, based in Luxembourg, continues to operate scheduled cargo flights to the Hungarian capital from the Far East. Cargo aircraft traditionally transport small volumes but high-value products, such as pharmaceuticals, mobile phones and computer parts. During the winter, cut flowers are flown to the international flower market in Amsterdam from other continents, and calves have been known to be transported by aircraft from Budapest to Israel for breeding.

Many large Western European airports are experiencing serious capacity issues, whereas all the conditions necessary for the construction of a major Central European cargo hub are in place at Budapest Airport, with sufficient space and infrastructure available for as much as 10 times the current capacity. René Droese, Property Director, Budapest Airport, who is also responsible for cargo operations, will be speaking about these development opportunities during the conference.

Photos of the conference can be downloaded here: <http://goo.gl/8x5VwA>

- Budapest Airport Zrt. is the operator of Budapest Airport. It is owned by an international consortium of investors, led by the privately-owned German company AviAlliance, an independent airport manager holding a 49.67% stake, together with Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (18.17%), Malton Investment Pte Ltd. (18.17%), Aero Investment S.á.r.l. (10%) and KfW IPEX-Bank GmbH (4%).
- Budapest Airport welcomed 8.5 million passengers in 2013, flying on the airport's services to 99 destinations across 34 countries.
- Budapest Airport's route development for 2014 include:
 - Already launched:
 - Norwegian thrice-weekly service to London Gatwick, 30 March
 - Air Serbia daily service to Belgrade, 30 March
 - Jet2.com twice-weekly service to Leeds Bradford, 3 April
 - transavia.com France thrice-weekly service to Paris Orly, 15 April
 - Wizz Air weekly service to Alicante, 14 June
 - Vueling thrice-weekly service to Barcelona, 21 June
 - Pegasus four times weekly service to Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen, 16 July
 - To launch:
 - Wizz Air twice-weekly service to Kutaisi, starting 30 September
 - Emirates Airlines daily service to Dubai, starting W14

To find out more on Budapest Airport, visit www.bud.hu

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