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EC proposing “better airports” package



The European Commission is proposing new legislation to prevent what it terms, “a capacity crunch” at the region’s largest airports.

To help increase capacity at Europe’s airports, the Commission has announced the launch of what it terms a “better airports package”. Included are measures on slots, ground handling and noise.

On the use of slots, the EC is proposing “market based mechanisms for the trading of slots between airlines in a transparent way”, together with measures to ensure that existing capacity is used by airlines, by raising the limit on the “use it or lose it rule”. Currently airlines have to use 80 per cent of their allocated slots, this will increase to 85 per cent.

Five airports are now operating at capacity, Heathrow, Gatwick, Frankfurt, Dusseldorf and Milan Linate. According to the Commission, by 2030 the number of key airports at capacity will increase to 19, including Paris CDG.

Regarding ground handling, there will be proposals to improve services including increasing the minimum choice of service providers available, where competition is restricted, from two to three.

An oversight role by the EC on airport noise restrictions is also planned but it will not affect any final decisions by the appropriate government.

Latvia buys out minority stake holder in airBaltic




Latvia has become the 99.8 per cent owner of airBaltic after acquiring the Baltic Aviation Systems (BAS) 47.2 per cent stake.


The move came about after the bank which had been holding the BAS stake as collateral, had its trading suspended last week and is now being run by regulators. The aim of the BAS share buy-out, according to the Government, is to protect the depositors of the bank.

It is understood that an investor in airBaltic is still being sort.

Airbus says in compliance with WTO's subsidy report

 Airbus has reported that there is a “Full European Implementation” of the World Trade Organisation’s report issued in May regarding subsidy allegations. **AIRBUS** In a statement, Airbus said that “Europe has implemented the WTO findings and thus brought the parties into full conformity with WTO obligations.....Whilst pleased with the WTO’s substantial affirmation of the European position in the decision, Airbus respects that the decision did contain limited findings of subsidy effects requiring action within six months of the decision”.
“We only needed to make limited changes in European policies and practices to comply with the Appellate Body’s report; we did what we needed to do and we did it in the agreed timeframe.” added Rainer Ohler, Airbus’ Head of Public Affairs and Communications.

China Eastern flight departs Osaka without clearance, need for more pilots in region.

 Investigations are underway following an incident on Monday when a China Eastern A330 departed Kansai International for a flight to Shanghai without gaining clearance from the air traffic control.
According to the Kyodo News Agency, the pilot of the A330 had been told to taxi to a runway and await further instructions, however the aircraft took off.
China Eastern confirmed that it will assist with the investigation and said that it will “further improve the English communication skills of its crew to assure flight safety”, perhaps believing that the incident came about due to a misunderstanding.
Concerns have been expressed in recent years of a pilot shortage in Asia, now the recent news of major aircraft orders have added to the urgency.
ICAO has forecast that Asia will need 229,676 pilots over the next two decades, up from 50,344 in 2010. It is believed that the target will be missed by about 9,000 pilots a year, requiring a need for about 14,000 but only having the capacity to train approximately 5,000.

Piece of Aviation History for December 2



1976 - The Boeing 747 SCA (Shuttle Carrier Aircraft) makes its first flight.
Originally manufactured as a 747-100 for American Airlines, it was acquired in 1974 and, after extensive modification, was also used initially for trailing wake vortex research as part of a broader study by NASA Dryden, as well as for the Shuttle tests. The first flight carrying the shuttle took place on 18 February 1977.

In 1988 a second SCA was completed. Originally a 747-100SR, it was acquired from Japan Airlines.

Quote of the Day

Personal happiness lies in knowing that life is not a checklist of acquisition or achievement.
Your qualifications are not your life. J. K. Rowling

A Bit of Light Relief

Seen on a sign outside a maximum security prison in Dannemora, New York:
“The Dannemora Fire Department reminds you it's fire prevention week. Practice your escape plan”.