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Russian air carriers increase Q1 cargo turnover by 9% reaching 1.3 bln FTK

TASS reports Volga-Dnepr Group takes leading positions in mail and cargo FTK.

Russia-based airlines showed a 10.2% increase in air mail and cargo FTK in Jan-Mar 2016 as compared to the previous year, and reached 252,84 thd tons. Freight turnover for the period increased 9%, reaching 1,34 bln FTK. Commercial payload increased by 0.6 percentage points reaching 63,8%, according to FATA (Rosaviatsiya).

Leading positions in mail and cargo FTK and freight turnover for the reporting period were taken by Volga-Dnepr Group with total freight turnover amounted 1.07 bln FTK (+13,3%). Cargo and

mail turnover of VD Group for the reporting period increased by 18%, up to 171,69 thd tons. Another VDG air carrier, AirBridgeCargo moved 162.42 thd tons (+20,5%), with turnover reaching 1,03 bln FTK (+15,9%).

Volga-Dnepr's share of moved freight amounted to 68%, with 15,2% by Aeroflot, and 4,2% by S7 Group.

In 2015, Russia civil aviation freight turnover reached 5.45 bln FTK, with 1.06 mln tons carried.

Volga-Dnepr Airlines first-ever 'season' of cargo flights to Antarctica transported over 190 tonnes of cargo to support the new DROMLAN international Antarctic project supported by nations including Belgium, Germany, Finland, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

On behalf of the project, run by the Antarctic Logistics Centre International (ALCI), Volga-Dnepr completed 12 return flights using its IL-76TD-90VD freighter. The flights commenced on 4 November last year and connected Cape Town with the Novolazarevskaya Antarctic Research Station, a distance of some 4,200 kilometres.

Volga-Dnepr delivered 125 tonnes of general cargo to the Antarctic airfield and carried a further 64 tonnes from the 'ice continent'. The shipments were for the implementation of research and logistics programmes in Antarctica and included an inland delivery of 34 tonnes from Novolazarevskaya Station to the central regions of the continent.

DROMLAN was created to reduce the expenditures of the project's participants in the Antarctic region. ALCI arranges

VOLGA-DNEPR TRANSPORTS OVER 190 TONNES OF CARGO IN FIRST 'SEASON' OF ANTARCTIC AIRFIELD OPERATIONS



series of 'ice runs' in Antarctica to check the performance and thrust reverser application procedures, and to obtain an addendum to the IL-76TD-90VD airplane flight manual to enable it to operate to ice airfields and transport up to 90 people onboard. We thank our partners and customers for their excellent collaboration with us and we look forward to our next series of flights to Antarctica!"

The 'ice run' flights onboard the IL-76TD-90VD aircraft were performed by a joint crew comprising of test pilots from Russia's State Research Institute of Civil Aviation (GosNII GA), Ilyushin Design Bureau, and technical personnel from Volga-Dnepr Airlines.

The modernised IL-76TD-90VD aircraft provides a series of advantages in terms of its flying distance capability, payload weight capacity, hermetical cargo hold, and its fuel efficient and environment-friendly engines. This enables Volga-Dnepr to successfully complete cargo and passenger missions in any remote regions with difficult weather conditions. Volga-Dnepr obtained special approval from Ilyushin Design Bureau to be able to provide a service to Antarctica for 'passengers' who accompany cargo by fitting removable seats into the cargo hold as required ■

intercontinental flights from Cape Town to the ice airfields of Queen Maud Land and inland flights using aircraft with ski-and-wheel systems. It also provides radio communications and weather monitoring for flight operations as well as food and accommodation for expedition participants. The Russian Antarctic expedition helped to launch the DROMLAN project and every year it prepares and maintains the runway near Novolazarevskaya Station, also providing the delivery of aviation fuel to the airfield.

"We have successfully completed our first series of IL-76TD-90VD flights to Antarctica," said Georgy Sokolov, Sales Director of Volga-Dnepr UK. The next series of flights will start in November because of the polar night environment and difficult weather conditions. We did a great deal of work before we could commence commercial deliveries, including pre-flight tests in Ulyanovsk, a



Volga-Dnepr engineers special transport frame for 59 tonne oil rig compressor delivery



Volga-Dnepr Airlines' Engineering & Logistics Centre (ELC) designed a unique transportation frame to move a 59 tonne compressor from Zurich to Singapore for inclusion into a bespoke Oil Rig build.

The frame served two purposes, spreading the weight of the compressor throughout the cargo cabin of the An-124-100 freighter and also protecting the delicate overhanging high voltage box. The 650 x 314 x 196cms compressor was also accompanied by associated cross-over pipework and fixtures weighing an additional 2,600 kilos.

Alan Baldwin, Volga-Dnepr's Business Development Manager, ELC, said: "The compressor had an overhanging high voltage connection box attached to it via a cylindrical tube section. It was imperative we protected the HV box from any movement throughout the transportation process to avoid putting undue stress on the connection and causing any damage. The HV box couldn't be removed for transit because it contained sensitive electrical wiring

which was directly connected within the compressor housing and the customer wanted to avoid sending an engineer to Singapore to re-assemble it, which would have added more cost and a potential time delay to the project build programme."

In preparation for the flight, Colin Taylor, ELC load planner conducted a site survey to gather vital dimensional data in order for detailed Autocad drawings to be produced for the design and fabrication of the support frame. To satisfy the customers' critical time requirements, the ELC team arranged for the frame to be manufactured in the UK with one of ELC's long-standing and reliable fabricators, which was able to produce the intricate design using bespoke materials. The frame incorporated a detachable supporting arm to ensure it could be transported to Switzerland onboard a standard trailer organised by ELC using one of its contracted European road hauliers to reduce cost for the customer. The arm was then reassembled to the main body of the frame at the shipper's premises in Zurich ready for the compressor loading.

The flight to Singapore - operated by Ruslan International, the An-124 joint venture between Antonov Airlines and Volga-Dnepr Airlines – was contracted by Pentagon Freight Services. Once completed, the oil rig will be floated back to northern Europe for final installation.

Commenting on the collaboration with Volga-Dnepr's ELC team in the UK and Russia, Gary Provins, Project Operations Supervisor of Pentagon Freight Services Plc, said: "The shipment wasn't without it's challenges, the main compressor wasn't designed to travel separately from its transport skid which due to build schedules had to be detached and shipped separately a few weeks in advance. This meant finding a solution for loading, securing, and load spreading which was achieved while at the same time providing support for the critical and highly delicate HV Box section of the compressor. All of which was well executed in conjunction with the engineering team at Volga Dnepr, and this time critical shipment was delivered to site smoothly where the fabricators were keenly waiting ready to receive, and install onto the platform" ■

AirBridgeCargo strengthens its quality service with Cargo IQ certificate

AirBridgeCargo Airlines (ABC) has been issued Cargo iQ certificate after it successfully passed the audit procedures for compliance with the International Air Transport Association's Cargo iQ quality standards. The document was presented during the session of Cargo iQ Technical Group in Essen, Germany on the 19th of April.

Following a two-day inspection ABC was issued a quality certificate which is valid for two year and acknowledges the airline's conformance to the highest global quality requirements. The audit process reviewed AirBridgeCargo's quality management programme, data analysis, customer service and interaction with suppliers.

"Quality has always been the core for AirBridgeCargo's business and now, with Cargo iQ membership and certificate, we have a baseline to rely on to support our further "Delivered as promised" enhancement following Cargo iQ's solid ➤



initiatives it has successfully developed throughout these years. Adopting a philosophy based on service quality has enabled us to constantly improve our performance for our customers and helped to secure ABC's place among the top airlines in terms of on-time performance. Compliance with Cargo iQ's quality programme demonstrates to our customers that we are committed to providing a consistently high level of service that is measured in accordance with the industry standard. We do hope that Cargo iQ's strategic transformation will be acknowledged and adopted by major players of supply chain as its mission aligns with the most important criterion for the whole cargo industry, i.e. – providing a client with the level of service, he expects, or better," said Denis Ilin, Executive President of AirBridgeCargo.

In support of its commitment to constantly improve its quality of service, in September 2015 AirBridgeCargo moved from Test to Implementation Status for Cargo iQ reporting. According to the independent Cargo iQ report last year, AirBridgeCargo is in the top 5 industry leaders for this quality indicator, an achievement that has already earned the airline positive feedback from its customers.

Ariaen Zimmerman, Executive Director of Cargo iQ,

added: "AirBridgeCargo is well-known for its commitment to customer service and quality improvement. It is their natural next step to be measured by the leading industry quality standard and make performance measurement transparent and available to its customers all over the world. Not just being better, but being visibly better."

AirBridgeCargo Airlines has been Associate Member of Cargo iQ, formerly Cargo 2000, since 2007. In 2011, ABC formed a partnership with TRAXON CDMP to compare planned and actual performance for its Freight Status Update messaging and to identify areas for improvement. In addition, it records the causes of any service discrepancies, enabling the airline to address problems and initiate improvement processes. Ultimately, in cooperation with partners across the process chain, ABC has been able to reduce errors and dwell times on the ground.

About Cargo iQ:

Cargo iQ is an IATA interest group with the mission of creating and implementing quality standards for the worldwide air cargo industry. Cargo iQ operates as a not-for-profit membership group supported by IATA and composed of some 80 major airlines, freight forwarders, ground-handling agents, trucking companies and IT solution providers globally.

Volga-Dnepr transports Breeze-M booster for Exomars mission space vehicles

Volga-Dnepr Airlines is continuing to support the ExoMars mission organised jointly by the European Space Agency and the Russian space agency, Roscosmos, by delivering a Breeze-M booster to Baikonur in preparation for the space vehicles' scheduled launch on 14 March 2016.

Carried from Moscow to Kazakhstan onboard one of Volga-Dnepr's An-124 freighters, the booster was protected by a special transportation container to maintain the integrity of its sensitive equipment. The 16-ton payload was loaded into the aircraft using the An-124's own overhead cranes. After the safe arrival and unloading of the booster at Baikonur, Volga-Dnepr returned the transport container to Moscow.

The Breeze-M Payload Assist Module was manufactured by the M.V. Khrunichev State Research and Production Space Center, which established a partnership with Volga-Dnepr Airlines in 1999. The Proton-M launch vehicle system, also made by the Khrunichev Center, will launch into the Mars orbit Schiaparelli – an entry, descent and landing demonstrator module - and a Trace Gas Orbiter module. This is the first in a series of Exomars missions.

In December, Volga-Dnepr Airlines operated three flights to deliver Schiaparelli and Trace Gas Orbiter modules from Turin, Italy, to the Baikonur launch site. One of the goals of

the Trace Gas Orbiter, in addition to exploring the composition of the planet's atmosphere, is to help identify a suitable location to land a robot vehicle on the Mars surface. This is scheduled for 2018 to enable the vehicle to drill in the planet's soil and to take samples.

The transportation of space cargo is one of Volga-Dnepr's key businesses and areas of specialisation, accounting for 34% of the airline's flight operations. In 2015, Volga-Dnepr operated 75 An-124-100 flights to deliver various types of space equipment, representing a 30% increase of this market sector over 2014. Last year, Volga-Dnepr Airlines delivered approximately 3,000 tons of space equipment ■



Volga-Dnepr Group and Sheremetyevo international airport join efforts to facilitate the development of cargo industry in Russia

Volga-Dnepr Group and Sheremetyevo international airport signed an agreement on long-term and mutually-beneficial cooperation in the field of cargo hub development in SVO airport which aims to achieve correspondence with the high global industry standards.

This is a strategic step and a milestone in the history of the companies' long-term partnership and intends to join forces of the airport and the airline in the areas influencing development of air cargo business.

"For our airport agreement of such level and context is the key to success as it anticipates systematic approach towards enhancement of cargo infrastructure. We are delighted to see that it embraces not only quantitative side when Volga-Dnepr Group guarantees an agreed volume of transit, transfer and import-export cargo flows, but qualitative side as well with building of up-to-date hangar complex for maintenance and repair services,

expansion of cargo facilities to offer handling for special commodities and, most importantly, provision of all the resources needed from our side" – highlighted Michael Vasilenko, Director General of international airport Sheremetyevo.

Besides cargo infrastructure enhancement in the airport the agreement will encourage cooperation with other international airports in order to increase cargo flows and exchange experience in terms of implementation of certain business-related projects and innovations.

"Both Volga-Dnepr Group and Sheremetyevo airport are strategically oriented towards development of a modern air cargo hub of international level at the premises of Sheremetyevo airport. All the agreements and mutual obligations reached in this agreement are particularly intended to guarantee high quality level of air cargo services for our customers" – pointed out Sergey Lazarev, Director General of AirBridgeCargo Airlines ■

Volga Dnepr Gulf (VD Gulf) participated in MRO Middle East (MR ME) in Dubai World Trade Center, UAE, on february 3 and 4, 2016.

MRO ME, Middle East's annual leading conference and exhibition for the commercial aviation maintenance industry, attracts top-tier solution providers and more than 5000 aviation industry professionals from all over the world.

This is the second year in a row for Volga Dnepr Gulf to exhibit in this world known MRO conference. The impressive stand used by VD Gulf attracted many industry experts and served as a platform for VD Gulf Sales and Management staff to show case capabilities and expertise. Several high level meetings were held with existing customers, potential new clients, OEM executives, Suppliers and equipment manufactures. Agreements were reached on partnership and collaboration with some of the companies who attended the meetings.

Victor Sherin, Managing Director of VD Gulf said, "The professional VD Gulf team presented itself at the MRO ME 2016 Conference and Exhibition with full energy and charisma explaining our capabilities and unique propositions to potential clients and customers. Digital presentation material and impressive stand design show casing our large state of the art hangar was displayed to the conference attendees."

Volga-Dnepr Gulf is based in Sharjah, UAE and operates a maintenance organization since 1996. From 2013 the Company built an advanced hangar facility of approximately 22 000 square meter area, designed to facilitate airplane maintenance and repair services. The hangar is capable of accommodating six narrow body (737/A320 size) and two wide body aircraft (747 or AN-124-100 size) simultaneously. The hangar is complemented with all required tools/ equipment for quality maintenance of various types of aircraft, and is fully air-conditioned with high quality fire protection systems. Volga-Dnepr Gulf is a holder of EASA Part 145 approval certificate along with many other regulatory authority approval certificates. Currently Volga-Dnepr Gulf is qualified to provide maintenance services on Boeing 747/

757/737CL/737NG and Airbus A320 family aircraft. This list is expanding every moth and additional aircraft models will be added soon. In addition VD Gulf is approved to support Russian aircraft models including IL-76, AN-24, AN-26, AN-32, AN-74 and AN-124. In Fujairah city there is an operational line maintenance station which provides maintenance services on AN-124-100, AN-74 and IL-76TD airplanes operated worldwide ■



New horizons for AirBridgeCargo's service development in Africa

As of February 14, AirBridgeCargo Airlines (ABC) has started new twice-weekly Boeing 747 freighter services to Africa.



AirBridgeCargo's new flights will operate every Thursday and Sunday under an ACMI contract with CargoLogicAir (CLA) using CLA's Air Operator Certificate (AOC) and flight numbers. The routing will start ex London Stansted (STN) via Frankfurt (FRA) to Libreville (LBV) and onto Johannesburg (JNB), returning to Stansted via Nairobi (NB).

These new destinations will provide ABC's customers with an even greater choice of delivery options while guaranteeing the high level of service quality delivered by ABC across its global network. The flight schedule allows for quick and easy connections with ABC's existing network at its regional European gateway at Frankfurt Airport. This latest network expansion opens up seamless connections to major markets in Africa for ABC's customers in North America, the Far East and Southeast Asia.

"The introduction of services to Africa is a big step for our company. For the last couple of years AirBridgeCargo has reached the 'high-water mark' of its organic growth model with its focus on its fleet, network expansion and consistently improving the quality of its customer service. We are now continuing our development by expanding into other parts of the world, including by means of partnership with other airlines. New points of

destination and origin in Africa will provide our customers with direct service via ABC's stations in Europe, Asia and the U.S. We are delighted to be working with CargoLogicAir as our ACMI partner to create these new opportunities for our clients," said Robert van de Weg, AirBridgeCargo Airlines' Senior Vice-President for Sales & Marketing ■

AirBridgeCargo increases Singapore services with third weekly B747 freighter

AirBridgeCargo Airlines is increasing its support of the Singapore market with the addition of a third weekly Boeing 747 freighter operation, commencing 1 April 2016.

The new Friday frequency is to satisfy growing customer demand and will offer onward connections to Hong Kong and to points across ABC's global route network. The airline launched twice-weekly services to and from Singapore in September 2015 with flights every Thursday and Sunday.

Robert van de Weg, ABC's Senior Vice President, Sales & Marketing, said: "Since the very start of our services, we have witnessed strong demand from our customers on routes to and from Singapore, more than 1,200 tonnes of cargo monthly. We particularly see rising

demand for ABC's dedicated cargo services to Singapore from Europe and the USA."

Mr Lim ChingKiat, Changi Airport Group's Senior Vice-President for Market Development, said: "Following the launch of AirBridgeCargo's inaugural freighter service at Changi Airport last year, we are delighted to welcome the airline's third weekly service after six months of successful operations. This growth in capacity will provide more cargo options between Singapore and Russia, as well as beyond to Europe and the United States. Going forward, we will continue to work with AirBridgeCargo to pursue growth opportunities at Changi."

Singapore, via AirBridgeCargo's Moscow hub, is directly connected to major European cargo gateways including



Frankfurt, Paris, Amsterdam and Milan as well as to the prime U.S. freight markets served by ABC's international route network. This enables the airline to attract freight flows from all points in Europe and the U.S.

Asia is a vitally-important market for AirBridgeCargo, which commenced Boeing 747 freighter services in the region in 2004. Last year, the airline increased its volumes to/from Asia by 25% and it is actively looking for further expansion in this dynamic region by developing niche markets with growing cargo flows ■

AirBridgeCargo reports flower business contribution to its february performance results

AirBridgeCargo Airlines has reported a 15% growth in its airfreight volumes in February, transporting over 37 thousand tonnes across its global route network in Asia, Europe, North America and Russia. The airline's FTK rose 3% to compare with the last year when the airline saw an extraordinary demand to air cargo services due to the strikes in the U.S. ports.

Particular growth was reported on North America-Europe routes, where ABC doubled its cargo traffic in the second month of the year YOY. In terms of the nature of cargo ABC enjoyed stable demand in its flower traffic in February. The airline performed 9 special flights for its customers onboard its modern Boeing 747 freighters to satisfy peaks in demand ahead of St. Valentine's Day on February 14th and International Women's Day on March 8th. The freshly cut roses were transported from Ecuador to the cities of Amsterdam, Karaganda and Ekaterinburg, Novosibirsk and Khabarovsk.

"As a specialist flower supplier, we require high on-time performance and a lot of flexibility from our logistics partners. For example, flowers that are harvested by a farmer on a Wednesday, and are then bought by us on Thursday, have to be repacked and ready to go on sale in shops in on Friday afternoon. So, we demand



delivery times within 72 hours, and we trust AirBridgeCargo to consistently achieve this level of service."- said one of the airline's long-time transportation partner.

Alexander Roschupkin, Commercial Director of ABC, commented: "Our team will continue developing the airline's tailored service for its customers, including those from the flower industry. In February AirBridgeCargo commenced performing

services to Africa where we see growing volumes of exported perishables, including plants. We also see increasing need for air cargo services in other markets such as Latin America and plan to further expand the airline's offering by providing international customers with wider choice of routes across the airline's international network and with special solutions to satisfy their air freight needs ■

Volga-Dnepr Gulf has successfully released the unique customized aircraft for «Iron Maiden» rock-band

During the period 9 January through 17 February 2016 an ex-Air France B747-400 aircraft, contracted by Air Atlanta to VD Gulf, underwent major rework, painting, cabin reconfiguration and customization for IRON MAIDEN rock-band World Tour called "The book of souls" on behalf of Air Atlanta Icelandic by VD Gulf staff at VD Gulf main hangar in Sharjah, UAE.

The transformation of the aircraft from Air France livery to Iron Maiden was a unique, the work was done meticulously and was an exciting project to VD Gulf Engineers and technicians. The project was monitored and closely followed up by Iron Maiden (the product user), Icelandic Civil Aviation (the regulatory body), Air Atlanta Icelandic (the owner of the aircraft) and by every VD Gulf manager and employee. VD Gulf management and staff are very proud that the final product was accepted by all parties who monitored the maintenance work.

This specially painted and uniquely configured Air Atlanta 747-400 aircraft will be used for a grand world tour by Iron Maiden codenamed "Ed Force One".

Sherin V., Managing Director Volga-Dnepr Gulf: "It was a great pleasure for us to be a part of this famous rock-band world tour program. The aircraft departed in excellent condition and in an impressive appearance. I'm sure that this unique experience will bring us more interesting projects in the future".

Air Atlanta Icelandic is one of the largest ACMI services provider in the world and offer tailor-made solutions to other carriers, both in the passenger and cargo industry. VD Gulf provides Boeing 747 base and light maintenance services on all

Air Atlanta 747 aircraft on regular basis.

Founded by bassist Steve Harris in the mid '70s, Iron Maiden is an established heavy metal's rock band with over 90 million album sales, more than 2000 live performances in 59 countries, tens of millions of fans and 16 studio albums of unerring quality and power to their name, Iron Maiden have more than earned their proudly-held status as one of the most influential and revered bands of all time.

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