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ACG Air Cargo Germany increases fleet

The collaboration with partner AirBridge Cargo (ABC) shows first positive results

The Hahn-based carrier Air Cargo Germany will up its four units comprising B747-400 freighter fleet by two additional Jumbos. Both aircraft are Extended Range Freighters (ERF) and equipped with a nose loading hatch. They come from ACG's stakeholder AirBridge Cargo (49%), the line-haul arm of Russian capacity provider Volga-Dnepr. ACG Air Cargo Germany expects both ERFs to join the fleet in October, depending on the certification by the German Aviation Authority Luftfahrt-Bundesamt.

"The aircraft enhance our reach and market options substantially due to their improved range capabilities compared to the B-400SFs and their nose loading door," stresses CEO Michael Bock of ACG. These items enable his airline to offer clients nonstop flights between Germany and Mexico or to destinations in Fareast and simultaneously the lift of outsized, very heavy or voluminous shipments.

The B747-400ERF can carry a maximum payload of 120 tons and fly 9,120 km nonstop. That is a range advantage of almost 1,000 km to the B747-400SF (Special Freighter) when fully loaded, capable of transporting a maximum of 110 tons.

Required for operating the two freighters are eight crews each aircraft, lifting ACG's cockpit staff to more than 100 Captains and First Officers. The skilled pilots have been hired meanwhile and are currently taking part in a special training program to get adapted to the standards and procedures common at ACG.

Next year two out of the four B747-400SFs currently operated by ACG Air Cargo Germany will be returned to lessor Martinair. Says CEO Bock: "We intend to replace these aging aircraft either by getting two younger B747-400Fs or the sister model B747-400ERF." Regardless of this specific issue ACG Air Cargo Germany will basically stick to managing a uniform fleet of Boeing Jumbo freighters. "This reduces complexity, lowers costs and enhances our flexibility," stresses Managing Director Thomas Homering.

Concerning the network CEO Bock announces some changes. Commencing in October ACG will add Beijing to its network, offering three weekly roundtrips to the Chinese capital. The new route complements the Shanghai services which have been part of the airline's schedule for several years. In addition Chicago will be upped from two to three frequencies per week and Mexico City from one to two flights. "South America is standing on our agenda, too, but will be materialized only in the near future," says Bock.

According to the manager the collaboration with stakeholder AirBridge Cargo works out very well. "We have identified a number of fields to create synergies," he notes. This applies especially to network adjustments where most optimizations are achievable in relatively short time. Thus, ABC has given up flying between Europe and North America entirely by letting partner ACG taking over this traffic. "We've

signed an interline agreement with ABC for enabling easy transfers of shipments in Moscow and Frankfurt,” says Bock. Rhein-Main is, next to Hahn, meanwhile ACG’s second hub in Germany and simultaneously ABC’s main European gateway. In fiscal 2011 ACG Air Cargo Germany turned over 230 million euros. The upcoming six freighters comprising business plan foresees sales of 430 million euros annually. The overall load factor in 2012 averages 80.4 percent, including both line-haul and charter traffic. 180 staff stands on ACG’s payroll.

For further details visit www.acg.aero.

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