

Virgin helps Delta to move into Heathrow

Delta Air Lines, the only one of the US "big three" carriers excluded from access to London Heathrow, proposes to gain entry through a code-sharing agreement with Virgin Atlantic Airways.

The carriers' chairmen met in London on 12 April to sign the deal, confident of Government approval on both sides of the Atlantic.

Virgin chairman Richard Branson says that blocks of

Eurowings dubious on Tanzania deal

German regional carrier Eurowings now says that it is "unlikely" to close a leasing deal with new Tanzanian company Victoria Airways.

The Nuremberg-based airline had been involved in negotiations over the lease of two ATR 42 turboprops to the new carrier, but says that it backed out over doubts about Victoria Airways' marketing capabilities.

"There is absolutely no agreement between Victoria Airways and Eurowings," says the company, which added that talks with several other potential new operators in Tanzania are continuing.

According to Eurowings, there is "a very big need for a reliable airline" in the country, to supplement the overloaded national carrier, Air Tanzania.

Some funding for such a company would come from German Government aid for developing nations. "We have a calculation which says that it should be possible to operate profitably in Tanzania," says the carrier.

The German company was drawn into discussions with Victoria Airways following an approach from ATR, which is examining the Tanzanian market and has completed a study of the operational potential of the new airline. □

about 50-100 seats on each Virgin flight from six US gateways will be sold to Delta, which would then price, market and sell them independently in the USA. Subject to approval, the deal will start in November. Branson also remarked that the code-share agreement "...leaves Virgin Atlantic the advantages of being a small independent airline".

The agreement covers Virgin flights to Heathrow from Los Angeles, New York (Newark and Kennedy), Miami, San Francisco, Orlando and Boston.

It brings a welcome increase in Virgin's seat sales and marketing power. The UK airline will move its New York Kennedy operations to the Delta terminal, operating its own lounge there.

The US airline's chairman, Ronald Allen, says: "We would prefer a completely open-skies agreement...[but] we see this as a long-term arrangement. We have no intention to dump Mr Branson." Allen adds: "The agreement is worded to protect our interests. The code-share would probably be needed, even if we got more access to Heathrow."

Delta will continue to operate services to London Gatwick from Atlanta, Cincinnati, Detroit and Miami. Virgin routes from Heathrow to Delta's main hub at Atlanta, says Branson, are "...something we should think about". □

Decision due on Latvian-SAS venture

The Latvian Government is to decide whether to push ahead with a possible joint venture between Latvian Airlines (Latavio) and SAS by the middle of May.

The commission established to examine the deal, proposed by SAS in December, held its first meeting on 14 April and should reach its conclusions within a month, according to



A surprisingly high proportion of BAe 146s are in storage

Parked fleet continues to expand

New data on stored airliners show that almost one in ten Western-built models is parked, of which approaching one-third meet Stage Three noise regulations.

London, UK-based consultancy Airclaims says that 1,094 aircraft out of a total fleet of 11,730 are stored. Of these, 754 (69%) are not Stage Three-compatible aircraft.

There are 332 examples of Stage Three aircraft out of service, together with eight re-engined machines.

The British Aerospace BAe 146 is conspicuous among the

quieter aircraft, because of the high proportion of the fleet — 23.9% of 230 aircraft — which is stored. That compares with fewer than one in 20 of the overall Stage Three fleet and 15.8% of Stage One and Two machines taken out of service.

Stage One and Two aircraft which may never be flown again include 13 stored Aero-spataiale Caravelles (30% of all current examples), 57 BAe One-Elevens (30%), 74 Boeing 707/720s, 323 727s (20%), 113 Stage Two 737s, 22 Fokker F28s, 41 McDonnell DC-8s (15%) and 111 DC-9s. □

Shorts considers maintenance centre

Shorts Support Services division may set up a European Service Centre to maintain Bombardier-built regional aircraft and corporate jets.

The proposal could see the division use the existing engineering capabilities acquired with the recent take-over of aviation-support company Airwork at Hurn Airport in southern England.

Support Services division vice-president Don Spot-

tiswood says that the scheme is at the exploratory stage, but if it makes business sense, he envisages having the centre in operation within three years.

Options being studied range from setting up a Bombardier spares centre at Hurn to the full maintenance centre for European operators of de Havilland Dash 7 and 8 regional turboprops, the Canadair Regional Jet and Learjet and Canadair business jets.

Like Shorts, the three airframe builders are owned by Canadian conglomerate Bombardier. Shorts is already heavily involved in civil maintenance and spares in support of its SD330 and SD360.

Spottiswood, speaking at a ceremony for the start of a five-year Royal Navy flying-grading deal, using Grob G115 D-2 trainers, says that the maintenance capability could lead the division into becoming a missionising centre for Learjet and Canadair aircraft. □

Latavio executive director Viktor Petrov.

SAS says that it would contribute five aircraft — a mix of Saab 340 turboprops and McDonnell Douglas DC-9s or Fokker F28s — as part of its stake. It expects to sign a memorandum of understanding with Latavio in the second quarter of 1994 (*Flight International*, 12-18 January). □