

# Crossair bases new sister in France

ANDRZEJ JEZIORSKI/BASLE

CROSSAIR HAS launched a new Alsace, France-based carrier aimed at avoiding European Union (EU) rules which have denied the Swiss airline access to a variety of destinations. Switzerland is not a member of the EU and cannot operate under its liberalised internal traffic arrangements.

The Crossair-dominated company, which had been provisionally dubbed Europe Continental Airways, will fly under the name of Crossair Europe. Starting capital amounts to SFr20 million (\$84.5 million), of which 40% comes from Crossair, with the rest divided

among French companies Linden Holding (25%) and Foch Finances Investissements (5%) and, in Germany, private businessman Friedrich von Bohlen und Halbach (25%) and Endress & Hauser (5%).

This move places 60% of the company shareholding in the EU, and allows the airline to fly routes hitherto inaccessible to Crossair. The carrier says that it will operate under French law, but in close commercial and technical co-operation with Crossair, with each airline marketing the other's product as well as its own.

According to airline director-general Philippe Perrin de Nelle, Crossair Europe will begin opera-

tions on 29 March with two 33-seat Saab 340 turboprops leased from Crossair. Initially, the airline will serve Marseille, Milan and Venice from its base at Basle, feeding passengers into Crossair's "Euro-Cross" network, covering more than 100 destinations in at least 20 countries. Because of its location, Basle Airport also serves the cities of Mulhouse in France and Freiburg in Germany.

The company plans 3,900 flights a year from 1999, with predicted passenger growth from 44,200 in 1998 to 78,000 in 2000, by which time it hopes to be bringing in revenues of SFr76.4 million.

Perrin de Nelle says that the

company plans to begin operating into Rome's Ciampino Airport from September, then into the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, as well as to more Mediterranean countries. "We are interested in getting traffic rights as soon as possible," he says. This would mean that, within the next two years, Crossair Europe could acquire a Boeing MD-80 from its parent to serve Mediterranean holiday destinations.

Crossair Europe is particularly keen to find an Italian partner. Switzerland has liberal bilateral arrangements with most EU states, but has generally had poor access to Greece, Italy and Portugal. □

## Boeing 'goes basic' on MMR

BOEING IS TO make the newly developed multi-mode receiver (MMR) a basic feature on all its commercial aircraft. The company was expected to certify the 757, the first type to be fitted with the system without an MMR, by the start of the year.

"We have decided to move to the MMR as a basic offering and we are also moving the GPS [global-positioning system] into it. MMR with GPS will be the only way to get it on the 757/767 soon," says CNS/ATM (communications, navigation and surveillance/air-traffic management) projects manager David Allen. The first aircraft are fitted with Rockwell-Collins MMRs, although some later ones have been specified with a similar Sextant Avionique receiver.

The use of the MMR minimises the number of avionics boxes on the aircraft and fits in a space used by the instrument-landing system (ILS). "We'll get into that box again for differential GPS," says Allen. The 757 installation, which was certificated in test flights using an aircraft destined to be the first C-32A for the US Air Force, will be followed by the 767 "some time in the first quarter of 1998", pending availability of an aircraft.

Certification is closely tied to the future-air-navigation-system (FANS-1) development for all

Boeing types. FANS-1 certification for the 757 is concurrent with the MMR, as it will be for the 767. Similarly, MD-90s and MD-11s bound for Saudi Arabian airlines will also have FANS certification as part of the applications in their Honeywell Pegasus flight-management-computer systems.

The 747-400, which has been certificated for the GPS (and the FANS-1) for some time, will be approved with the MMR by June. The certification will be for operation with the ILS only in its initial form, but will be extended to include the GPS from September, when Air New Zealand is due to take an aircraft equipped from new with the FANS-1. "The 777 will also be offered with the system as basic," adds Allen. The system is also certificated for ILS use only on the Next Generation 737 and will be expanded later to include the GPS, as will the current 737 family.

Almost 350 FANS packages have been sold and nearly 200 installed on 747-400s (65-75% of the fleet). The FANS will soon be certificated with the MMR on the 757 and 767. The 737 is offered with a partial FANS package, including required navigation performance, airline operational-communications datalink and the GPS, but not automatic dependent surveillance, or controller/pilot datalinks. □

## FAA and NTSB tackle 747 fuel-tank safety

THE US FEDERAL Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) have begun efforts to make Boeing 747 fuel tanks safer. Officials are seeking an early meeting with the American Petroleum Institute to discuss converting commercial aircraft from Jet-A fuel to military JP-5 fuel, which has a higher flashpoint.

The NTSB, meanwhile, has called for a meeting in the middle of this month with the parties involved in the 1996 crash of the Trans World Airlines Boeing 747-100, to explore action needed. The Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee will advise the FAA within six months on viable ways to purge vapours and ignition sources within fuel tanks. □



## First Boeings delivered to Saudi Arabian

SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES received its first Boeing 747-400, 777-200, MD-11F and MD-90 during a ceremony in Seattle on 22 December. The \$7.5 billion order, placed in 1995, for up to 61 aircraft, includes 23 777-200s, five 747-400s, four MD-11Fs and 29 MD-90s. Delivery has been delayed by several months while the airline finalised financing for the order. Six aircraft were due for delivery to Saudi Arabian before the end of 1997.