03.03.2005 | AirBridge Cargo Launches sheduled flights from Europe to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk via Krasnoyarsk for oil and gas industry

AirBridge Cargo (ABC), Russia's first scheduled all-cargo airline, has commenced scheduled flights from Frankfurt, Germany, to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk via one of its Russian hubs in Krasnoyarsk.

The new route has been launched within the framework of co-operation between ABC and KrasAir. AirBridge will deliver cargo from Frankfurt to Krasnoyarsk onboard its scheduled Boeing 747-200 service to connect with the KrasAir and AirBridge Cargo's IL-76 flights to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

The first flight operated on March 3rd 2005. The two airlines will initially operate a weekly frequency on the route and this is expected to be increased to three flights a week in line with customer demand.

Previously, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk was only served by ad hoc charter flights, mainly Antonov 12 aircraft capable of carrying only 14 tonnes of cargo. The new ABC/KrasAir scheduled service will meet the growing demand for freight transportation services between the continent and Sakhalin Island, especially from the oil and gas industry. Market experts have forecast massive development within the Sakhalin I and II oil fields over the next 20 years. Independent forecasts predict international companies will invest US$23 billion in development of oil and gas fields in the region.

Stan Wraight, Managing Director of AirBridge Cargo said: “Our cooperation with KrasAir on this flight represents the start of our development programme to build a system for network deliveries around Russia and the CIS using Russian hubs. Combined with existing cargo flights between Europe and Asia through Russia, AirBridge Cargo forms a totally new, unique transportation product for the Russia and CIS markets. With the size of the existing market and future growth potential, we expect to gain significant industry support for our services to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.”

The program to create a new cargo hub at Krasnoyarsk Airport has received strong support from the administration of Krasnoyarsk territory in terms of providing the facilitation of custom formalities and reducing cargo transit times. As part of this program, airport facilities, including cargo warehouses, are to be upgraded and will be followed by construction of a state-of-the art cargo terminal corresponding to international standards.

Cargo handling at the airport is performed to international standards and the process of establishing a joint venture with Swissport is under way.

AirBridge Cargo’s current schedule includes four flights from Frankfurt to Shanghai via Moscow’s Sheremetyevo airport, one flight from Frankfurt to Beijing via Novosibirsk and three flights from Luxembourg to Beijing and Tianjin via Moscow’s Domodedovo airport. Flights from China to Europe are being performed via Moscow and Krasnoyarsk.