26.05.2014 | AIRBRIDGECARGO AIRLINES: A TEN-YEAR JOURNEY TO A MAJOR GLOBAL AIR CARGO PLAYER

Russia's largest scheduled cargo airline, AirBridgeCargo Airlines (ABC), is celebrating a remarkable milestone; launched as a scheduled service provider within the Volga-Dnepr Group in 2004, ABC has developed into one of the major international cargo airlines and is now an important part of the Group's portfolio. ABC currently operates scheduled cargo flights to 11 countries and connects the largest flows of cargo on Asia-Russia-Europe-USA trade routes.



'ABC is much more than just an air cargo bridge between the largest global consumer markets. The company is a trusted and reliable partner, it provides air transport solutions for specific industries and is able to transport any type of cargo, including shipments requiring special handling or a temperature-controlled environment,' says Denis Ilin, Executive President of AirBridgeCargo. "ABC is a recognised

market player with proven high-quality services," he continues.

During its first decade of development, despite the turbulent economic times, the airline took significant steps to improve the quality of its products. When the Volga-Dnepr Group launched ABC in 2004, it operated a single B747-200 aircraft and served five destinations. However, ABC is now proud to operate a fleet of 12 Boeing 747 freighters (5 Boeing 747-8s and 7 Boeing 747-400s); as a result, it has one of the youngest and most modern fleets in the air cargo industry and it serves 23 scheduled destinations all over the world. By establishing a flexible network, ABC can offer its customers freight deliveries within 48 hours on almost all its routes and this is highly attractive for customers around the globe. The airline's focus on improving the punctuality of its services has enhanced its "Delivered-As-Promised" index, which now exceeds the average within the industry. ABC is also adopting Cargo 2000's quality management system and has obtained accreditation in line with the international compliance standards of the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA).

ABC started its tenth anniversary year with the strongest first quarter in its history; tonnage was up nine per cent to 86 500 tonnes in Q1. The airline has continued to extend its network this year and reinforce its position in existing markets. In the USA, AirBridgeCargo has included Dallas in its route network and increased the frequency of its services to Chicago. In Europe, the airline has added Leipzig and Munich as scheduled destinations and launched weekly flights to Malmo. In addition, ABC has started direct flights from Frankfurt to Chicago, so providing customers with an even wider choice.

"Our main stra tegy, as in the past, is to be flexible when introducing new routes and destinations to our network. We pay particular attention to changes in the market place and are constantly searching for new effective cargo delivery solutions for our customers. Belly carriers are unable to provide this kind of flexibility. This means that customers prefer all-cargo airlines. Europe has always been one of the key strategic markets and this has contributed to the development of ABC over the last decade. Our latest developments in the European market reflect the changes there and give our customers an enhanced choice of reliable point-to-point air cargo services."

The main gateways for AirBridgeCargo in Europe are Frankfurt/Main and Amsterdam. "We're now one of the largest air cargo carriers at Frankfurt Airport," says Ilin and adds, "We plan to further increase our presence here." ABC currently operates 14 weekly flights from Germany's largest cargo airport and operates other flights to the United States and Asia through its hub in Moscow.