



SMARTLYNX AIRLINES TURNOVER INCREASED BY 18% IN 2016, PLANS TO EXPAND OPERATIONS TO ASIA, NORTH AMERICA AND CANADA

News / Airlines, Finance



A consolidated audit of SmartLynx Airlines, which is the second largest passenger air carrier and third largest passenger carrier in Latvia, shows that net turnover of the company in 2016 increased by 18% to 108.4 million euros. Aircraft wet lease services represent 53.3% of the company's business portfolio, with charter flights taking up another 45.5% thereof.

The aircraft wet lease (ACMI) services net turnover made up 57.7 million euros, in 2016, or 15.3% more than in 2015, while charter flights turnover amounted to EUR 49.4 million, or 21.9% more than last year. Other segments of the portfolio – 1.2% or EUR 1.3 million – consists of SmartLynx ATO, which is the leading pilot training centre in the Baltic States and offers type rating courses for Airbus A320 series.

Zygimantas Surintas, SmartLynx Airlines CEO, says that the good financial indicators are down to increasing operating efficiency, fleet renewal with newer, higher lease rate aircraft, more active sales strategies and purposeful attempts to expand the airline's area of operations. Z. Surintas

says that there is an increasing demand for air transport, which suggests that the market has recovered from the economic crisis and the recession. People's financial situation has stabilised, and their travel habits have returned to the pre-crisis level.

“Over the last few years, the number of passengers travelling with SmartLynx has constantly increased – 1.6 million in 2015 and 2 million in 2016,” says Z. Surintas. “In 2016, we made 13,300 flights from 19 base airports in Europe and one in Asia, which represents 38,000 block hours.”

A Netherlands-based investment fund, Tripod Investment Management, became the new owner of SmartLynx in 2016. “This offers us broader financial opportunities, and we feel strong support from the investor, so we can feel safer about the future and come up with more ambitious goals,” says Z. Surintas.

The company's strategic plan is to become the first choice for medium range ACMI and charter solutions in Europe. To do this, the company plans to expand its fleet and its area of operations, says the executive director: “In Europe, our business is subject to seasonal shifts, and the market is most active from May until October. For that reason, it is important for us to enter markets that have no seasonality, and that means that we will continue to seriously develop our operations outside of Europe, particularly in Asia. There we see the greatest growth in economic terms and in terms of passenger numbers. We already have a base in Vietnam, and we are thinking about

flights to Cambodia, India, the Philippines and Malaysia. We're also going to try to enter the North American and Canadian market. Our plan is to offer flights from Canada to Latin America and the Caribbean islands."

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