

SECTORUPDATE

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RVL ADDS CAPACITY WITH NEW AIRCRAFT

RVL Aviation, an RVL Group company, is set to start 2021 in a typically positive and enthusiastic style with a huge expansion of its cargo capacity. The East Midlands Airport-based airline has taken delivery of its first Saab 340B freighter, as part of a multi-aircraft deal. Each Saab offers roughly four times the cargo volume and payload of aircraft in RVL's existing fleet of Reims-Cessna F406s and King Air QC cargo aircraft.

"Our customers have been asking us for larger aircraft and we are poised to deliver them," said RVL's Head of Commercial, David Lacy. "Having the new aircraft in the fleet means that we shall have the capacity to fly larger payloads, further and quicker than our current fleet allows. The Saab is an ideal aircraft for both our long-term cargo contracts and ad hoc cargo missions.

From parcels to engine parts to urgent pharmaceutical and medical loads, RVL Aviation is ready, willing and able to deliver.

"Everyone at RVL is enormously excited by the prospect of operating the Saabs and taking advantage of the substantially larger cargo volume and payload that they offer. We are confident that they will be key to securing new business."

WATCHDOG TO INVESTIGATE RYANAIR'S 'JAB & GO' CAMPAIGN

The UK's advertising watchdog is set to investigate Irish budget airline Ryanair after a recent campaign showed a vaccine bottle and invited customers to 'Jab & Go'.

The Advertising and Standards Authority has received thousands of complaints about the advert with some arguing that it misled

customers into thinking the vaccine would be rolled out by summer 2021 while others suggested it trivialised the pandemic.

The phrase 'Jab & Go' is being used to promote cheap flights to summer destinations across social media and on Ryanair's website. [\(Link: UK Aviation News\)](#)

SEVEN UK AND IRISH AIRPORTS ACHIEVE CARBON NEUTRALITY

Seven British and Irish airports – including RVL Group's home base East Midlands – have achieved carbon neutrality, according to the Airport Carbon Accreditation Programme (ACA).

The seven are: London Gatwick, London City, Manchester, East Midlands, London Stansted, Farnborough and Dublin.

According to the ACA, to achieve 'Level 3+ Neutrality' status airports must meet a number of criteria, including determination of emissions sources within the operational boundary of the airport company; calculation of the annual carbon emissions; compilation of a carbon footprint report; provision of evidence of effective carbon management procedures; demonstration of quantified emissions reductions; and offsetting of emissions with high quality carbon credits.

Most airports are achieving this by the use of alternative energy, such as creating their own solar farms or using bio-energies. Other factors include the use of energy-efficient lighting and heating and switching to electric vehicles.

[\(Link: UK Aviation News\)](#)

QANTAS AIMS TO RESTART INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS FROM JULY

Australian air carrier Qantas is aiming to restart international flight services from July. However, Qantas' aim has received a reproach from the Australian government.

Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack said: "Decisions about when international travel resumes will be made by Australian Government. International borders will be opened when international arrivals do not pose a risk to Australians."

[\(Link: AeroTime Hub\)](#)

UK OPERATORS STALLED BY BLOCKS ON MARKET ACCESS



The British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA) reports, in an [AINOnline](#) story that the UK business aviation sector faces significant disruption as it waits for negotiations to be concluded with European Union (EU) countries over market access and other regulatory issues. In the first week since the end of the December 31 end of the transition period for the country's Brexit departure from the EU, aircraft operators have complained of costly and time-consuming obstacles to getting clearance for commercial flights.

The British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA) met with officials from the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on January 6 to discuss the need to advance bilateral negotiations that now need to be conducted with each of 27 EU member states. UK operators are finding that "freedom of the skies" rights supposedly covered by the air transport sections of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement implemented at the end of the transition period are now not being automatically granted in other countries.

The UK has offered to allow EU operators to continue exercising third and fourth freedom rights allowing flights to and from the UK for a two-year transition period. Fifth freedom rights,

allowing flights within another country or onwards to another EU state, are only now permitted for UK operators carrying cargo.

According to BBGA chief executive Marc Bailey, several EU member states are not reciprocating this offer of extended rights. Some of these states now make UK operators apply for permits for each and every flight, requiring an initial €4,000 (\$4,440) fee, 48 hours notice, extensive security details, and getting permission from all other operators in that country. "Disappointingly, their approach has not created the expected level playing field we believed were simple third and fourth freedoms," he commented.

BBGA is encouraging DfT negotiators to prioritize securing bilateral agreements with 10 EU states in the hope that others may follow suit. According to data from analysts WingX, the most significant states for commercial business aircraft operations would include Germany, France, Spain, and Italy.

Over the past week, operators have complained that German officials have taken the hardest line in restricting market access and that French operators have raised what they viewed as unjustified objections to flights. BBGA is hoping that agreements can be reached with the top 10 states over the next two or three months while

Covid lockdown rules mean that traffic levels are much lighter than normal. It has provided its members with an email address to report difficulties directly to the DfT negotiating team.

BBGA had hoped that 2021 would see negotiations to focus on going beyond the basic terms of the EU-UK agreement to include fifth freedom rights, but the group now acknowledges that it first has to secure the lesser traffic rights. Negotiators were not permitted to begin bilateral talks until the end of the transition period at midnight on December 31.

"Our goal is to encourage reciprocity in whatever shape the final agreement takes with each individual country," Bailey said. "Each discussion may well result in a different outcome, and we have highlighted to members that a standard bilateral agreement may not be the final outcome in each case. It could be as simple as a memorandum of understanding, or it could become a full agreement with annual reviews."

Bailey indicated to AIN that if EU member states do not offer acceptable bilateral terms the UK may feel compelled to withdraw its offer of a two-year transition period for traffic rights. BBGA is concerned that the lack of equitable market access rights could undermine fair competition.

Beyond traffic rights, the UK industry also faces potential difficulties over issues such as recognition of pilot and mechanic licenses, and also the importation of aircraft and components. These issues are expected to be subject to further negotiation on an EU-wide basis, but it is unclear when progress might be made.

Despite what would appear to be a significant downgrade in post-Brexit trading conditions for UK companies, BBGA says it remains optimistic about the industry's long-term prospects. Bailey said the UK's ability to forge new bilateral agreements with countries outside the EU will give its members an advantage. ([Link: AINOnline](#))

BRITISH AIRWAYS SECURES A £2BN STATE LOAN



British Airways has received a £2 billion loan guaranteed by the state-backed credit agency UK Export Finance (UKEF).

The agreement implies that BA will borrow the money from a syndicate of banks, but the Government will be partially liable if the carrier fails to repay. UKEF is the Government's export credit agency that grants financial support to overseas buyers of British products and services that qualify for such aid.

"British Airways expects to drawdown the facility in January subject to the agreement of final terms with the lenders and UKEF," IAG announced.

One of the underwritten loan's essential conditions is that only BA's activities can be covered by the state's backing but not those of other members of the International Airlines Group. The support provided to BA will help it bounce back after the pandemic and prepare for the recovery of air travel. Before the recent £2 billion loan announcement, IAG had €8 billion of cash in its reserves and undrawn loan commitments. [\(Link: Aviation Voice\)](#)

AIRLINES UK BOSS PLEADS FOR GOVERNMENT HELP

Airlines UK chief executive Tim Alderslade has called for clarity and action from the UK Government to help prevent further damage to the airline industry.

Writing in Travel Weekly, Alderslade says the combination of a multitude of global travel bans and UK lockdown restrictions means air travel will be at a minimum for at least the first quarter of the year. "With the critical spring and summer seasons looming, this is not a situation any of us wanted to be in. Ministers should not be under any illusions as to what the sector requires in the short term.

"Put simply, if we cannot move beyond the initial test-to-release scheme and put in place a robust and credible 'phase two' mass testing regime for aviation, the future of our industry will be very uncertain indeed.

"Without the ability to bring in critical revenue, airlines may have no alternative but to tap the Chancellor for assistance,



only this time in the form of grants rather than loans. There remains a limit to the amount of debt carriers can take on, having already done everything asked of them by the Chancellor and absorbed billions from private investors, banks and the Treasury. It is not unreasonable for aviation and travel to expect the same kind of support as handed out to the hospitality industry, on the basis that trading has in effect been shut down.

"By failing to support UK-based airlines in the same way, the government runs the risk of helping to export our connectivity to heavily subsidised overseas airlines."

[\(Link: Travel Weekly\)](#)

AEROBILITY'S 'PROJECT ABLE' WILL ENABLE MORE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO FLY

Aerobility, the leading aviation charity based at Blackbushe Airport, Hampshire, and Tatenhill Airfield in Staffordshire, offers disabled people and veterans the opportunity to fly.

Earlier this year it embarked on its 'Project Able' initiative, centred on the introduction of eight refurbished Grob 109B aircraft for flight training. Now, thanks to a grant from the Department for Transport, the project is fully underway.

Each of the overhauled and adapted aircraft will help around 2600 disabled people take to the skies every year.

[\(Link: BlueSky\)](#)

AMAZON AIR BUYS 11 BOEING 767S

Amazon Air has continued to expand its owned-freighter fleet with the purchase of seven B767-300 aircraft from Delta Air Lines and four B767-300s from WestJet.

The 11 new aircraft are the first owned directly by Amazon, which has run its air cargo business through lease deals with ATSG, Atlas Air and Sun Country in North America and Gecas/ASL in Europe.

The company said it would continue to rely on third-party carriers to operate these new aircraft.

The four aircraft bought from WestJet are currently undergoing passenger-to-cargo conversion and will join Amazon Air's network this year, and the seven aircraft from Delta will enter Amazon's air cargo network in 2022.

Amazon said its fleet expansion comes at a time when customers are relying on "fast, free shipping more than ever".

[\(Link: Air Cargo News\)](#)

LONDON CITY CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



London City Airport has completed key improvements to its airfield infrastructure, including the construction of a full-length parallel taxiway and eight new stands capable of handling larger and more fuel-efficient aircraft.

The airfield infrastructure has been transformed in the past three years, with the construction of a 70,000m² concrete deck to house the parallel taxiway and aircraft stands.

The deck was created by drilling 1000 piles of concrete 20m below the bed of the King George V Dock - one of the most challenging and complex civil engineering and inland marine construction projects in Western Europe. The deck is equivalent to the size of 10 football pitches and its completion required the work of 45 contractors and took more than 1.2 million hours.

The parallel taxiway is now operational, maximising the potential of the airport's runway and providing the ability to allow 45 aircraft movements per hour when demand returns. In addition, the airport now possesses eight new aircraft stands capable of accommodating the next generation of cleaner, more sustainable aircraft such as the Airbus A220 and Embraer E2-190. ([Link: BlueSky](#))

GLOBAL AIR CARGO VOLUMES ON THE RISE

Despite no traditional peak season for global air cargo demand in the final quarter, 2020 ended on a relative high with the first positive year-on-year growth in weekly volumes in more than 12 months, according to the latest industry statistics from analysts CLIVE Data Services and TAC Index.

Volumes in the period 21 December 2020-3 January 2021 rose by 8% in comparison with the same period 12 months ago, contributing to two new records for CLIVE Data Services' 'dynamic load factor' analyses.

Based on both the volume and weight perspectives of cargo flown and capacity

available, the load factor reached a new high of 73% in mid-December, while week ending 3 January 2021 saw an unprecedented level for this time of year of 65%, 13% points above the corresponding week a year ago.

"For an industry looking for every glimmer of positivity, December's data provided some modest growth indicators. December's performance was surprisingly strong compared to the flattish level recorded in November and, in the second half of the month, volumes didn't fall as much as we'd typically anticipate for this normally quieter time of year," commented Niall van de Wouw, managing director of CLIVE Data Services. ([Link: Air Cargo Week](#))

BREXIT LEADS TO IMPORT WOES

Tax changes which came into force on January 1 as a result of Brexit have led to some online retailers based in the EU and worldwide to cease exports to the UK. Mail and freight companies have also added surcharges to their rates for deliveries to Britain.

The moves follow changes in VAT rules: VAT is now being collected at the point of sale rather than at the point of importation. This means that overseas retailers sending goods to the UK are expected to register for UK VAT and account for it to HMRC, even if the sale value is less than €150 (£135).

Adam French, Which? consumer rights expert, said consumers would be frustrated if the new VAT rules were applied in a way that causes significant inconvenience.

"It's vital the Government makes it clear to consumers as well as traders what the changes as a result of Brexit mean for them and how they shop. It should also work to ensure UK consumers can retain access to a wide range of competitively priced and quality goods."

Mail and freight company TNT has said it is now imposing a surcharge of £4.31 on all shipments between the UK and the EU. "FedEx/TNT has been making incremental investments to adjust our systems, processes, resourcing and customer-facing solutions to ensure readiness for the change on 1 January," said the company.

"To reflect these investments and the incremental cost of customs clearance, we are increasing transportation rates for shipments from UK to EU, and EU to UK." Rivals DHL and UPS have also taken similar measures. ([Link: BBC](#))