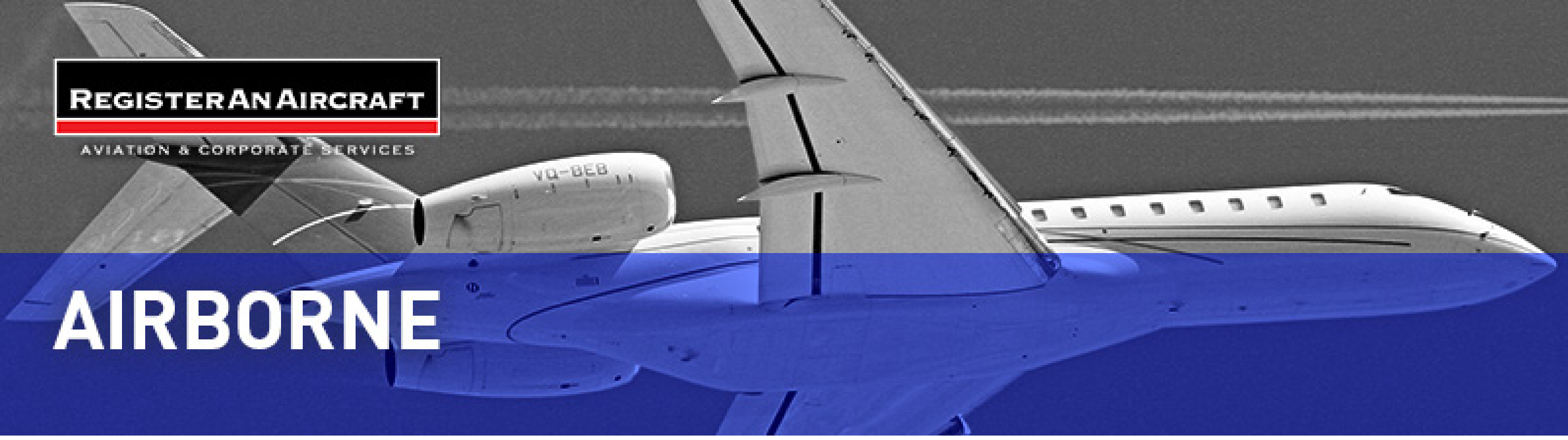

AIRBORNE

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Russia's registered bizjet fleet - one year after the invasion

The first anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine seemed an appropriate time to look at the size of the bizjet fleet registered in Russia. RANA Director Brian T Richards has taken a snapshot of the RA- registered fleet in 2022 and compared it with the latest available data from official and unofficial sources.

The conclusion is striking. The number of bizjets registered in Russia has increased by just over 35%, with the bulk of these aircraft being de-registered from a small number of 'offshore' and onshore registries known to be popular with Russian owners. The vast majority of the newly added aircraft come under the large cabin bizjet/corporate airliner category.

In February 2022 the RA-register hosted 102 bizjets. The latest data shows a total of 138. The gross increase is 45 airframes, which have been registered since February last year, with the net difference of nine accounted for by non-related de-registrations. The net increase can largely be attributed to aircraft with Russian connections being de-registered and then RA-registered to allow continued domestic operation in the face of international sanctions.

The table below breaks down the 45 aircraft added Russian bizjet register by type since February 2022.

Airbus ACJ318/319/320	5	Dassault Falcon 8X	2
Bombardier Global XRS/5000/6000/7500	16	Embraer Legacy 600/650	8
Boeing BBJ1	3	Gulfstream G450	3
Bombardier Challenger 650	2	Gulfstream G550	2
Bombardier Challenger 850	1	Gulfstream G650	2
Dassault Falcon 2000	1		

The following breaks down the 45 by previous state of registration, where applicable.

CS-Portugal	1	P4-Aruba	3
LX-Luxembourg	1	T7-San Marino	5
M-Isle of Man	11	VP/VQ-B Bermuda	12
(New build)	2	VP-C Cayman Islands	2
OE-Austria	5	9H-Malta	3

Pre-owned bizjet inventory up 40%

The available pre-owned bizjet inventory is now 40% higher YoY than the record low availability seen during the pandemic, according to specialist data analyst Jefferies, with a 23% increase over the last six months. Another key figure shows that the size of the inventory for sale is still just 3.3% of the total in service fleet, a figure that remains low when compared to the five-year average of 5.8%.

Perhaps the most startling statistic relates to bizjets less than seven years out of production. Here inventories have risen by 91%, while prices have also risen by 25%. Interestingly, all categories of aircraft have contributed to the increase in inventory, with the number of large cabin jets increasing by 56%, medium jets by 25% and light jets by 51% compared to 2022 levels.

European and North American traffic levels continue to soften

The trend in business aircraft activity continues to soften compared to 2022. The latest data prepared by specialist analyst WingX, covering the period to 5 March shows overall traffic 6% down on the comparable period last year. It comes in the wake of the Super Bowl held on 12 February in Glendale, Arizona, which saw a 25% fall in bizjet traffic compared to 2022 in Los Angeles. But overall traffic remains well ahead of pre-pandemic 2019 tallies – 16% higher over the 1 January to 5 March perioded.

Drilling down by region, overall North American traffic in February was 12% higher than 2019 but 6% lower than 2022. There was also an interesting divergence between domestic and international US traffic. Domestic bizjet flights in February were 7% lower than last year, but 16% higher than pre-pandemic 2019. In contrast, international bizjet sectors to and from the US were 5% higher than 2022 and 14% greater than 2019.

Traffic levels in Europe have continued to slide compared to last year, with February figures 10% lower than the same period in 2022. It makes an interesting comparison with scheduled airline traffic in February, which was 25% higher than a year ago but 22% lower than 2019. If the Russian market is excluded from the data, there were 7% fewer European bizjet sectors in February 2023 than in February 2022 – but that figure remains 9% higher than 2019.

AVIATION SERVICES HUB:
Aircraft registration

It may be a cliché, but there is no 'one-size-fits-all' aircraft registry. Several new registries have been launched over the last few years and more are in the pipeline. Many existing registries have also made changes to their offering by expanding the scope of acceptable aircraft operation and ownership. Each is seeking to attract owners and operators of corporate aircraft – a comparatively small but highly lucrative market – with what they consider to be a unique selling point.

The reasons for registering an aircraft outside the owner's home jurisdiction are many and various, and it should always be remembered that what might be an appropriate register for one client may not be suitable for another. All credible registries must be able to be offer outstanding service, cost efficiency, flexibility in terms of acceptance of aircraft and crew standards, as well as providing security, confidentiality and political neutrality. Some may also offer potential tax savings and the benefits of asset protection and limitation of liability through corporate ownership.

The top 10 most delivered business aircraft of 2022

Once again OEM deliveries have been analysed to produce the top 10 most popular business aircraft last year.

Aircraft	Sector	Number delivered
Cirrus SF50 Vision	Jet single	90
Pilatus PC-12	Turboprop single	76
Embraer Phenom 300	Twinjet	59
Daher TBM 900 series	Turboprop single	54
Piper PA-46-500TP/600TP	Turboprop single	50
Cessna Citation 680A Latitude	Twinjet	42
Gulfstream G650/650ER	Twinjet	41
Bombardier Global 7500	Twinjet	40
Pilatus PC-24	Twinjet	39
Bombardier Challenger 350/3500	Twinjet	38

Shipments and billings improve across the board in 2022

Both billings and shipments of business and genav aircraft improved in all categories last year, according to data compiled by the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA). Combined fixed wing billings rose by 5.8%, with shipments increasing by 6.5% over 2021. Similarly rotorcraft billings were 6.8% greater and shipments 7.5%. In its annual 'State of the Industry' presentation, GAMA confirmed a total of 2,818 fixed-wing aircraft deliveries in 2022 – an increase of 170 over the previous year. GAMA President and CEO Pete Bunce said: "The general aviation manufacturing industry continues to show increasing strength despite workforce and supply-chain challenges across our industry."

Climate change protesters disrupt bizav events

Small groups of environmental protestors briefly interrupted two high profile events. On 15 February, the European Business Aviation Association's (EBAA) Airops23 conference in Brussels was targeted, and this was followed by the annual conference of the British Business & General Aviation Association (BBGA) in London on 2 March. The protesters had the same message – expressed by campaign group Fossil Free London – that the events were targeted because "aviation is totally unsustainable [and] no technology currently exists to turn it green". They called for additional taxes on aviation and a ban on private flights. The response from both the EBAA and BGAA has been a commitment to fight against misinformation and promote the sector's environmental achievements and the recognition of sustainability.

Corporate aircraft news

On 15 February, the 100th example of the Gulfstream G600 was handed over to an unnamed client in North America by the Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation having completed the aircraft at its Dallas centre. The first 'new generation' G600 was delivered in August 2019. The Savannah-based OEM also delivered the 100th example of the smaller G500 sistership on 26 September last year.

Completing the analysis of major OEM deliveries for 2022 which we started last month, Embraer Executive Jets has now confirmed that it delivered 50 aircraft in Q4 – a stellar performance because this quarterly total represented almost half the annual number. It brings the Brazilian manufacturer's whole-year tally to 102 – in line with its forecast of between 100 and 110 deliveries. The total comprises seven Phenom 100, 59 Phenom 300, 15 Praetor 500 and 21 Praetor 600. The figure for 2022 is nine more than it achieved in 2021.

By contrast, deliveries recorded by Pilatus Aircraft fell to 133 units in 2022. This compares to a record-breaking year in 2021, when the Swiss manufacturer handed over 152 aircraft. The 2022 total was comprised of 40 PC-24 jets and 80 PC-12 turbo singles, along with 10 PC-21 military trainers and three PC-6 utility turboprops. The firm's financial performance was much improved, however, with earnings rising by 7.6% to CHF226 million and an order backlog of CHF2.4 billion.

AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\

Yakovlev Yak-40

CATEGORY

Regional jet

MANUFACTURER

Yakovlev, USSR

ENGINE

3 x Ivchenko AI-25 turbofan

LENGTH	WINGSPAN
20.36 m	25.00 m

RANGE	MAX. SPEED
1,800 km	858 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY	NO. OF CREW
32	3

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

15,500 kg

DESCRIPTION

The Yak-40 was designed to fill a niche within the huge fleet of the Soviet Union's national airline Aeroflot. The airline needed to replace a large number of obsolete piston aircraft with an aircraft that was capable of operating in often challenging and remote areas. The Yakovlev Design Bureau's solution was this small regional jet. The aircraft made its first flight on 21 October 1966 and entered service in September 1968. By the time production ceased in 1981, 1,011 examples had been produced.

The first Yak 40 produced for export – designated the Yak-40EC – left the USSR in 1970. Since then, the aircraft has seen service with airlines and air wings in 75 countries and is significant as the first Russian aircraft to gain a type certificate in both Italy and Germany. Several countries, including the Czech Republic and Poland, used the aircraft in VIP transport roles. In fact, the Czech example pictured above was on one of its final such flights to Zurich in 2020, just prior to retirement.