

Guernsey's 2-REG to cater for commercial operations

Guernsey's parliament unanimously approved, on 17 December 2015, a proposal to permit the Channel Islands Aircraft Register (2-REG) to issue Air Operator Certificates (AOCs). The move, which will enable Guernsey-registered aircraft to operate commercially, will differentiate Guernsey from competitor registries such as the Isle of Man and Jersey, which cover only aircraft operated for private or corporate use.

2-REG Aircraft Registry started operations in December 2013 and accommodates all aircraft types from larger airliners through to general aviation, based anywhere in the world. Although 2-REG has enjoyed only limited success in the registration of private jets in the face of stiff competition from other jurisdictions, it has generated considerable business in the temporary registration of commercial airliners that are dormant between operational leases.

The proposal, published in Billet D'état XXIII, noted that the aircraft registrar has worked with the operator (SGI Aviation) to "retarget the Aviation Registry to appeal to business rather than private clients". New legislation to accommodate the AOC operations is now being drafted and is expected to pass for final government approval on 9 March 2016.

Guernsey's Director of Civil Aviation Gus Paterson said: "Our business-to-business approach has won over major lessors and this is the logical next step in the development of our portfolio. We will bring to market an innovative and focused AOC that sets high safety and operational standards and is built upon our unique commercial philosophy."

Dassault sales and deliveries slump

French manufacturer Dassault Aviation announced a major slump in its Falcon corporate jet sales for 2015. Full data for 2015 will be issued at the end of next month but preliminary figures released by the company show that overall sales fell by 72% compared to the previous year. The net tally for 2015 was just 25 aircraft – the gross total of 45 being reduced by the cancellation of an order for 20 Falcon 2000s by fractional specialist NetJets. The company also reported a fall in deliveries with only 55 aircraft delivered in 2015, down from 65 in 2014. The company further noted that it holds a backlog of 91 orders – down from 121 at the end of December 2014. The company's new flagship tri-jet Falcon 8X is due to receive FAA and EASA certification by the middle of this year, while the new twin Falcon 5X looks set to make its delayed first flight in September.

Gama to buy Aviation Beauport

Farnborough airport-based Gama Aviation, which completed a £130 million merger with Hangar8 Management in January 2015, continues its expansion. This month it announced that it is set to acquire the long-established Jersey-based business aircraft service provider, Aviation Beauport. It is understood that the deal is worth £5.33 million and has been backed by a £10 million credit facility with The Royal Bank of Scotland to cover acquisition and expansion. Gama, which operates over 140 business jet aircraft in its combined fleet, noted in a statement that the recently launched Jersey Aircraft Register provided an opportunity to expand corporate aircraft traffic on the island. The deal with Aviation Beauport is subject to approval by the Jersey Competition Authority.

AgustaWestland rebrands

Italian manufacturer Finmeccanica announced a wide-ranging corporate reorganisation to merge its aerospace, defence and security assets, effective 1 January 2016. As part of this move, AgustaWestland is to be rebranded as Finmeccanica Helicopters. Finmeccanica's previous structure of a holding company and subsidiaries is now being reformed into four business areas – helicopters; aerospace; electronics, defence and security systems; and space – and seven divisions. The aim of the new operational model is to achieve synergies and economies of scale. The seven divisions will be: helicopters; aircraft; aerostructures; avionics systems and space; defence electronics land and naval; defence systems; and security systems and information. AgustaWestland was formed in 2000 by a merger of Italy's Agusta with the UK's Westland Helicopters.

First HondaJet delivered

The long-awaited FAA certification of the HondaJet HA-420 was confirmed on 8 December. Just two weeks later Honda Aircraft Company delivered the first aircraft to a customer at its headquarters in Greensboro, North Carolina. Seating up to six passengers, the HondaJet is marketed as "the world's most advanced light jet". Honda Aircraft President and CEO Michimasa Fujino said: "We are very excited to commence deliveries of the HondaJet, fulfilling Honda's commitment to advancing human mobility through innovation. Honda Aircraft has now extended this commitment skyward with the delivery of our first aircraft, and I hope we soon will begin to see many HondaJets at airports around the world."

RANA SERVICE CENTRE:

Aviation insurance

Sovereign Insurance Services (SIS) is a fully licensed independent general insurance intermediary based in Gibraltar. With direct links to specialist underwriters based in London and elsewhere, SIS can provide wide-ranging bespoke insurance cover for owners of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. The team further offers market insight, expertise and competitive pricing, together with efficient and professional claims handling. Specialist aviation insurance covers the full range from public liability through to hull insurance for new or used airframes. The SIS team can quote on all types of aviation asset – from corporate jets and turboprops, general aviation aircraft and helicopters to FBOs, flying schools or commercial passenger or freight operators. SIS also specialises in areas such as kidnap and ransom insurance, which may also be of interest to aircraft owners and operators.

Qatar Airways Executive takes first Gulfstream

Qatar Airways Executive (QAE) took delivery of its first Gulfstream G650ER at the manufacturer's plant in Savannah, Georgia, on 11 December. The aircraft, which was handed over to Qatar Airways group CEO Akbar Al Baker, is the first of up to 30 Gulfstreams that the corporate charter division of the airline has on order. QAE firmed up a memorandum of understanding with the manufacturer for a mix of G500, G600 and G650ER during last year's EBACE and ordered a further 10 aircraft. The company expects its first G500 in 2018. Akbar Al Baker said: "Qatar Executive demands nothing less than the best for its discerning passengers and the G650ER, as the technologically most advanced business jet available in the market, enables us to offer a superior product to our valued customers."

Traffic falls in Europe once again

The latest edition of Business Aviation Monitor produced by Hamburg-based WINGX Advance makes for depressing reading. In November there were 56,200 corporate aviation departures in Europe – a reduction of 2.5% over the same period in 2015. For the year to the end of November, overall traffic is down by some 0.8% over the first 11 months of 2014. The reasons are familiar to anyone who has monitored these figures over the last few months. The huge decline in the Russian corporate jet market is starkly reflected in November's figures. Russian flights were down by 30% in November with figures for flights from Russia to Europe reduced by 23% overall. Activity in Western Europe also remained flat but with a substantial fall (7% YoY) being registered in Italy.

Corporate aircraft news

First announced way back in 2006, the Cirrus Vision SF50 is finally closing in on FAA certification. The single-engine, seven-seat aircraft is marketed as "the realisation of a vision to reimagine and reinvent the jet airplane in order to create a whole new category of aircraft – The Personal Jet." In late December, Cirrus Aircraft, based in Duluth, Minnesota, provided detailed performance targets for the new design. These include a take-off ground roll of 621m, a maximum altitude of FL280 and a landing ground roll of 525m. Certification is now expected by the end of Q2 this year.

French manufacturer Daher announced, on 7 December, that it had delivered the 100th example of its TBM 900 turboprop single to a US customer. This impressive tally comes just 20 months after the programme was unveiled. The 900 is an improved version of the TBM 850, featuring some 26 enhancements including winglets and five-bladed propeller.

In a significant landmark, Brazil's Embraer delivered the first Legacy 450 to a US customer on 22 December. Just eight days later, the manufacturer handed over the first 450 to a European client – a Luxembourg-registered charterer with the aircraft to be based in Brussels.

Wichita, Kansas-based Textron Aviation announced that it is to discontinue production and marketing of the Cessna Citation 525A CJ2+. The cessation comes in the wake of the success of the Citation M2 and the CJ3+, which compete in many areas. The original CJ2 entered service in 2000 and the upgraded CJ2+ followed in late 2005.

Short finals...

Graffiti at Van Nuys

The night of 27 December was a memorable one for security staff at Van Nuys airport in California for all the wrong reasons. Vandals cut through a perimeter fence and spray-painted graffiti on three aircraft. It is understood that two of the aircraft were parked in an open-sided hangar, with the third outside. According to local sources, the aircraft belong to Aerojet Services LLC, Fair Wind Air Charter and Private Air Inc. Van Nuys airport suffered a similar attack in 2012 when graffiti was sprayed onto a Learjet – an unwanted act of livery customisation that cost some \$100,000 to make good.



Photo - LAPD



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

SN.601 Corvette



CATEGORY

Mid-size jet

MANUFACTURER

Aérospatiale, France

ENGINE

2 P&WC JT15D-4 turbofans

LENGTH

13.83 m

WINGSPAN

12.87 m

RANGE

2,555 km

MAX. SPEED

760 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

Up to 14

NO. OF CREW

1-2

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

6,600 kg

DESCRIPTION

The SN.601 was Aérospatiale's sole entry into the corporate jet market. The project had its origins as a joint design produced by Sud Aviation and Nord Aviation during the mid-1960s. The prototype – the SN.600, powered by JT15D-1 turboprops – first flew on 16 July 1970 but sadly crashed just under a year later. The SN.601, with a fuselage stretch of 1.05m and more powerful JT15D-4 engines first flew on 20 December 1972. The design received French certification in May 1974 and customer deliveries began later that year.

Production of the Corvette was limited, with just 40 aircraft built (including test airframes). The decision to terminate the project came at the end of 1976 after disappointing sales. Although designed as a corporate transport, the Corvette was also sold to several French regional airlines as a commuter airliner and found use in aerial photography and ambulance roles. A total of seven aircraft remain listed in active service today.