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Chartered Flight Champion Tailwind Provides Devoted Support to European Return Flights During Global Crisis

In this interview, Mehmet Bostan, Tailwind Airlines Managing Director discusses how the company is meeting the challenges faced worldwide due to the pandemic. With a confident short-medium term focus, Tailwind Airlines has no plans to change their fleet or crew and plans to balance their customer base by offering services in the Eastern region.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Mehmet Bostan, thank you for your interview with us. Could you please start off by giving us some information about Tailwind Airlines, founded in 2006, and how the company has become

one of Turkey's successful charter airlines?

Mehmet Bostan: Tailwind Airlines has been operating mainly touristic charter flights until today after obtaining its operating license in 2009. The majority of our customers are tour operators who bring tourists from Europe to our country during the summer and the travel season for this customer group lasts about 7.5 months.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Along with offering charter flights, we know that your company also offers ACMI-Wet Lease service. Could you tell us about this service?

Mehmet Bostan: As I mention in my previous

response, due to the length of the summer travel season we need to conduct other businesses during the 4.5-5 months aside from the summer season. ACMI-Wet Lease service comes first in these other activities. This service is the periodic leasing of our aircraft with its crew to foreign airlines that require high capacity aircraft especially during the winter. In such collaborations which have a lower turnover, our objective is to cover some of our fixed costs incurred during these winter months.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Tailwind Airlines conducts flights to many of touristic points in Turkey from many European and Near East countries and contributes

to the tourism industry by the transport of a large number of tourists to our country. We know that you plan to expand to Asian countries in the near future. Considering the recent developments, could you inform us on your new road map?

Mehmet Bostan: Tailwind Airlines does not consider making any changes in its plan regarding charters and ACMI activities in the short and medium term. Last year we decided to renew our fleet. There is no deviation from this decision; the recent developments have caused a delay in this plan. With our increasing number of aircraft and renewed fleet, our aim is to become a more competitive charter airline

and ACMI operator in the upcoming period.

Aviation Turkey: This unprecedented Coronavirus outbreak has had a severe affect the aviation sector and the tourism sector. How has this pandemic changed and updated your roadmap? Could you please tell us about the activities and operations you plan to carry out in the forthcoming period?

Mehmet Bostan: As I also mentioned in my answer to your previous question, there is only a delay in our plans, no other changes have been made. Most of our flights have been conducted from Europe since our foundation, but in recent years our country has increasingly become a center of attraction for the citizens of eastern countries. We aim to increase our flights especially during the



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winter period by creating a balanced distribution of customers in both directions.

Aviation Turkey: What would you like to say about emergency flights that you conducted in Turkey and internationally during this period?

Mehmet Bostan: Charter airlines are often utilized by companies during difficult times. In this extraordinarily difficult period, we have

brought together, via tour operators or various intermediary companies, the citizens of various countries who were stranded abroad due to the suspension of scheduled flights and who wanted to return to their country. We transported them to their home countries with our team providing devoted support, and this effort continues. In this way, we help people to reach their homes and at the same

time we boost employee morale by not suspending our operations completely and also achieve a small amount of cash flow.

Aviation Turkey: What measures have been taken by your company related to COVID-19?

Mehmet Bostan: In addition to the measures required by legal regulations, we follow the policy to reserve toilets for passenger use and those for the crew only



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on our aircraft. Our flight attendants use masks and gloves throughout the flight. Also, we recently started to use protective clothing. For short-haul flights, food and beverage service was ceased except for bottled water in order to limit contact with the passenger. Additionally, we have a sufficient number of masks on our aircraft to be used by all passengers when necessary. In-flight magazines were also removed to limit the risk of contamination. At the end of all flights with passengers, our aircraft are disinfected against the Covid-19 virus.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: In the midst of the flight bans which started in March and are expected to

continue for a while, what are your short-medium term plans regarding your fleet and staff?

Mehmet Bostan: We continue our preparations with the assumption that the flights will resume in line with the planned schedule as of July. Although the government has recently forbidden businesses to lay off workers under the current situation, we have previously made our decision in this direction, so we have no intention to surrender any of our employees. However, in this process, we strain to make maximum use of the opportunities provided by our state. To this end, we have applied for the Short-Term Working Allowance for our employees.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: With aspirations of getting back to normal in the middle of summer, the aviation industry is expected to recover in our country. What is your opinion regarding this process both for Tailwind Airlines and for the summer season in the tourism sector?

Mehmet Bostan: We do not expect to return to normal in the middle of summer, as if nothing has happened. But, as we have a customer portfolio that places great importance on vacation programs, we do not expect them to spend summer at home this year. If the negative impacts of the outbreak really weaken and become tolerable, we believe we can compensate for the

losses we suffer, not in 2020 alone, but into 2021 as well.

✈️ Aviation Turkey: Mr. Bostan, do you have a message that you would like to convey to our readers?

Mehmet Bostan: As we all know, aviation, with its high costs, is one of the industries that is affected first and foremost under negative circumstances. However, Covid-19 reminds us that the most important thing in our life is "health". I believe that this process can be overcome by unity and solidarity; we have to follow the warnings of experts to stay healthy. I wish everyone good health and I hope that our lives will return to normal soon 🙏



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