

BREAKING NEWS – Frankfurt-Hahn Airport Enters “World Cargo Airport Alliance” With Zhengzhou Airport

Zhengzhou airport (CGO) in the Chinese province of Henan was much in the news of late due to the Henan government’s investment vehicle having acquired 35 percent of Cargolux and the carrier’s plans to operate regular flights from LUX to CGO.



Sealed their cooperation - executives of Zhengzhou Airport and Frankfurt-Hahn

Now, the Chinese airport, again supported by Henan province has entered into a so called “World Cargo Airports Alliance” - in short “WCAA,” with Frankfurt- Hahn airport in Germany.

This was made public and signed today (9 May) at a press conference called by both airports in Hahn. It was stated by the Chinese delegation that this is the first agreement of its kind with an airport in Europe.

Is this really the case?

A high level delegation from the Henan Airport Group and BST Logistics managers joined with Hahn airport’s management in presenting their plans for future cooperation.

The agreement basically notes that the development of air traffic between both airports is to be advanced further, this along the lines of agreements which were or are in effect with other airports.

The agreement has been masterminded by BST Logistics and its partner Navitrans who together organize freight flights worldwide, and in this case on behalf of the Henan Province Airport Group.

What does this then mean for Hahn airport?

It is Hahn’s aim to ensure that present cargo traffic flows be firmed up even more and furthermore that the 3 weekly flights already operated by BST (Navitrans) are secured and be doubled within the coming twelve months. There is cooperation between both parties already for the past twelve years.

Navitrans has been using Hahn since 2004 and presently uses an Atlas Air Boeing 747-8F for a three times weekly “round the world” service operating from CGO to the USA, then onto HHN and back to CGO.

If this service were to be doubled as BST Logistics claim it will, then this would by itself give Hahn airport a much needed boost in tonnage of up to an additional 27,000 tons p.a.

The Henan province has proven to be economically sound and has been busy in the past two years in investing outside of China.

The most notable of these investments was made earlier this year with their 35 percent holding in Luxembourg’s Cargolux Airlines.

It is not clear as to whether the Hahn deal will have any relation or effect on the deal with Cargolux.

It is up to the Hahn airport’s management (FFHG) to make sure that this cooperation between both airports works to their mutual benefit.

Hahn’s management stresses the fact that this deal fits perfectly within their strategy for cargo expansion in the future and is aimed at making HHN even more attractive for foreign carriers in the coming years.

BST (Navitrans) already have good business relations with Hahn for many years, the HHN management adds.



Li Weidong of CGO and Hahn’s Markus Bunk signed the pact

Zhengzhou, BST and Hahn officials commented as follows:

Mr Li Weidong, Vice President of Zhengzhou airport stated after giving his audience a detailed rundown on Zhengzhou and the region, that “much closer cooperation is definitely the trend for the future as cooperation and the exchange of ideas will be the basis for a firm and stable growth.”

Mr Li Weidong went on to say that together, Frankfurt-Hahn and Zhengzhou airports wish to promote the international airfreight market further.

Mr Sebastian Chan of BST (Navitrans) added

that “our vision is to create viable cargo airport alliances that are price competitive, efficient and give first class customer service.” He stated further that the aim is that airlines should decide for handling among the “alliance airports.”

In closing he mentioned that further airports in the USA and Russia are planned to join the alliance.

Prof. Salvatore Barbaro, Chairman of Hahn’s Supervisory Board, mentioned that he is proud of the fact that Hahn airport is the first partner within WCAA and despite the negative press received by the airport in the past weeks, the management pushes ahead full speed with its sales activities. He added that the visit to China by Mrs Malu Dreyer, Minister President of Rhineland-Palatinate was surely most helpful in pushing this agreement forward.

Hahn’s management has since it’s revamping earlier this year produced quite a “to do list” to bring the airport back to scratch.

Many of those items on the list are related to enhancing the product pallet at the airport in order to attract more airlines, especially those from the Far East.

Christoph Goetzmann, Director Business Development at Hahn, states that “we are delighted about the new partnership and our dedication to utilize the advantages that this agreement will bring us.” He went on to say that “we stated earlier this year that we need to change course at Frankfurt-Hahn airport and this is a right step in that direction.”

Whether, as mentioned above, any of this will reflect on the present Cargolux-Zhengzhou deal is still not clear and that question posed by CargoForwarder Global to the Chinese delegation remained unanswered.

So! - Who is supporting who?

When also questioned by us whether an identical agreement has been or would be signed with the Leipzig airport, CFG was told “no, there would not be.”

This however, is in contradiction to a press release of today from Leipzig airport’s management which clearly shows that an alliance agreement was also signed yesterday by them with the Henan Airport Group.

The wording of the release by Leipzig is almost identical to that of Hahn.

Therefore, the decisive question at this stage of development is what strings are being pulled behind the scenes and to what purpose?

It is clear however that this is not an exclusive agreement and leaves the question open as to whether the Henan gentlemen are on a “shopping trip.”

But for what purpose?

The best case scenario for HHN would indeed be an increase in cargo operations to the airport. They have the proper set up for it and are putting a lot of effort into reorganizing various aspects of handling and sales activities. It would be unfair if they were to be let down.

As to whether this will be realized through today’s signing, remains to be seen.

John Mc Donagh