

# Hahn Cargo - Back on Track With China & South America

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The 28th of August was it seems a deciding date for the future of Frankfurt-Hahn Airport's cargo operations. The inaugural flight from China to Hahn on this day heralds a new era for the airport that has been plagued with financial and operational problems for the past few years.

## New owner stands to their promise

The Chinese Hainan Airport Group part of HNA Modern Logistics Division won the bid for the takeover of 82.5% of Hahn from the local Rhineland-Palatinate government earlier this year. The contract was finally signed on 1. March and executed on 6. August after the European watchdogs gave their final thumbs for the deal. HNA, as a sign of good faith from their side, had already paid the 15.1 million euro sale price into a Rhineland-Palatinate escrow account earlier this year.

The majority share of the airport is now under HNA management control and they have placed their own management on board.

Mr Wang Hexien takes up the Chairman of the Board and Managing Director position.

The CEO position is held by Mr Anson Fan and Christoph Goetzmann, who until now acted in a consultancy role with HNA, takes up the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Roger Scheifele, responsible for Sales and Marketing now has an additional responsibility as Director Airport Operations.



Christoph Goetzmann (left) and Rudolf Stich briefing the media - courtesy HNA

## Press conference maps out the future road

On the day of the inaugural flight Hahn's COO Christoph Goetzmann along with Rudolf Stich, the State Secretary from the Rhineland-Palatinate's Interior Ministry, held a press conference. Both gentlemen emphasized the fact that the HNA group has every intention of investing further in Hahn in order to expand present operations. Mr Stich pointed out that HNA has stuck to all aspects of the deal and has integrated themselves well into Hahn's infrastructure and staff.

The first cargo flight with a Suparna Airlines (formerly Yangtze River Express) Boeing 747-400F arrived from the Chinese city of Xi'an. In the initial stage, there will be a once weekly (Monday) operation from Xi'an to Hahn and back to China. This is expected to rise to at least three weekly rotations in the near future.

Mr Goetzmann stated that future expansion depends on market development, but is confident that the air cargo operation will advance further due to the continued global economic growth. Secretary Stich stated that Hahn's future growth is essential for Rhineland-Palatinate and that the local government will stick to its promise to invest a further 25.3 million euros between now and 2024.

When questioned on "why airlines or freight agents should prefer Hahn to other airports," Goetzmann stated that the HNA management sees a future for Hahn as a viable cargo airport and with the 24/7 operation and on-site handlers giving clients a seamless product, along with an attractive product offering, that this makes the airport attractive for future carriers. He further stated that "we are working on special product offers for our clients but we are not in there to buy ourselves into the business."



Suparna B747-400F landing is sign of better (freight) times ahead at Hahn.

## Cargo carriers increase frequencies

In the meantime AirBridgeCargo Airlines have initiated a twice weekly Moscow - London Heathrow - Hahn - Moscow B747F operation on Thursdays and Saturdays. Etihad Airways Cargo has upped their twice-weekly operation with B777F equipment to four flights per week. Two of these (Thursday/Saturday) operate from Hahn to Bogota with tech-stop in Barbados. This gives Hahn their first direct South American destination along with last week's newly inaugurated China service.

The three weekly Air Atlanta / Magna B747F operations to the U.S. city of Greenville / Spartanburg are running well Mr Goetzmann informs us. There are plans to add extra flights into Africa with this carrier soon.

When asked by CargoForwarder Global whether he sees a future for Hahn as an e-commerce centre, Goetzmann points out that Hahn is essentially an ideal location and this could well be another product arm for the airport in the future, but that the priority at the moment lies in cementing Hahn's hard-cargo operation. This development he says is helped by the fact that operations in Hahn are less complex than at other airports, along with fast delivery to consignees, no slot problems and the famous 24/7 operating possibility.

## Handling is topic on HNA's Hahn agenda

Christoph Goetzmann revealed to CargoForwarder Global that HNA plans to have their own cargo and mail handling operations by the first quarter of 2018. Further investments in its own facilities are presently under final development. The aim is to provide a reliable, cost effective high quality handling in the future. This will be extended into the e-commerce and ground logistics market.

Normally very tight lipped and somewhat conservative on the future outlook, he remains however enthusiastic to facilitate a future traffic growth (beyond those already announced) by present customers within the next month or so. Other sources indicate that even more all-cargo flights from one or the other airlines present at Hahn, above those mentioned herein, will become reality in the near future.

## ADC withdraws from bidding for remaining 17.5%

The German State of Hesse still owns 17.5% of Hahn Airport and it was expected earlier this year that a bid by the German-Chinese company ADC GmbH for this part would be accepted. However, Hesse has been back-peddling on a decision whether to sell or not and last week ADC's management stated that they are no longer interested in taking the remaining 17.5%. The question remains as to whether Hesse, which is a majority shareholder in Frankfurt-Main airport, will stay on board in "Frankfurt-Hahn" in order to keep an eye on its future development. The above it seems is not a problem for Hahn at the moment. The airport handled 58,000 tons of cargo in the first six months of 2017. This represents an increase of +56% over 2016.

Back on track? - it seems so with the addition of China and South America.