

A boost for European competitiveness

INTERVIEW WITH BRANDON MITCHENER

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EASA's recent approval of single-engine, turboprop aircraft for commercial operations in Europe is a major step forward

What is the outlook and key trends you can see for the European Business Aviation industry over the next five years?

After several years of sluggish growth, the signs are favourable for a new direction in 2017, with Q1 traffic figures up 6.7% from a year ago. We haven't seen these levels of growth for a decade. I am cautiously optimistic for the future outlook of our industry.

As for key trends, we are witnessing an expanding array of offerings for new and existing passengers and aircraft owners, including easier points of entry, new modes of operation and novel business approaches to meet new market demands. Our industry gives demanding private and public customers flexibility and freedom of choice, facilitating versatile travel options among a wide range of solutions – not to mention vital air ambulance flights. This diversity of choice is further enhanced by new developments in areas such as satellite-based navigation, (GPS-based) LPV approaches and augmented vision technologies, which are demonstrating their effectiveness and enhancing the sector's safety in accessing smaller airports in all weather.

We are also working with the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to ensure that the regulatory framework accommodates these innovations. In this regard, single and twin-engine turboprop offerings are expanding choice. EASA's recent approval of single-engine turboprop aircraft for commercial operations in Europe is a major step forward, opening the market to a wider range of more accessible aircraft.

What do you consider to be some of the misconceptions about Business Aviation which still need to be addressed in Europe both amongst policy makers and the general public?

Business aviation isn't just for the jet set. Because it is not that well known or understood, some people associate it with unhelpful and inaccurate ideas of elitism and high costs. That may be true for some flights, but it's certainly not true for all of them. We conducted a study in 2016 with Grayling on the perception of business aviation, and the key finding here was that the more people and stakeholders such as policymakers and business leaders are familiar with the sector, the better their perception and attitudes towards it. When asked if they viewed business aviation as necessary, only 3% of policymakers and 11% of business stakeholders responded negatively.

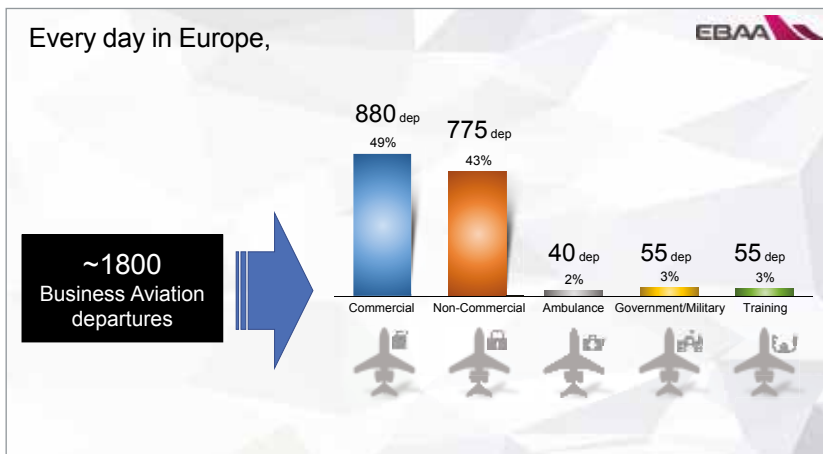
The key point here is that we need to improve the way we communicate the key benefits of business aviation, namely: productivity gains, time efficiency, security, accessibility and environment. In essence, we need to help society understand that business aviation is a specialised travel solution and investment strategy, enabling people to meet face-to-face when time matters most, leading to new opportunities, careers, and economic and regional growth.

What are EBAA's key messages to the policy and regulatory authorities, in terms of the economic benefits of Business Aviation and what are the key issues which EBAA is currently engaged with?

Business aviation boosts European competitiveness and productivity, connects communities and remote regions, contributes to improved environmental sustainability and leads the way in terms of operating to the highest safety and security standards. In terms of its economic contribution, it is a catalyst for high-value tourism, trade and innovation and promotes investment in a highly skilled, highly paid workforce that improves regional economies and increases Europe's competitiveness. This multiplier effect makes it a true economic force in Europe.

According to a 2016 Booz Allen Hamilton study on the Economic Impact of Business Aviation in Europe, business aviation accounts for some:

- EUR 100 billion in annual turnover
- 400,000 jobs



- EUR 1 billion in time saved in a year by European companies using business aviation for their employees
 - EUR 2840 in average productivity gains per passenger per trip
 - Two hours average time saved per trip over the fastest commercial service within Europe
- These are some robust figures that demonstrate the contribution of our sector to the economy.

What do you perceive as the key challenges for the industry - in terms of the policy and regulatory framework in Europe?

EASA's recent approval of single-engine turboprop aircraft for commercial operations in Europe is an excellent example of how our industry and this Association are working with regulators to achieve sensible, proportionate regulation. We are also working closely with EASA on flight time limitations and runway performance, as well as seeking to accelerate the introduction of SBAS LPV approaches to give enhanced and safer all-weather access to small airports. And, we continue to defend the interests of our industry with regard to airport access and take-off and landing slots.

What, if any, are the implications which "Brexit" may have for the Business Aviation Industry and the work of the EBAA?

It is essential to keep in mind business aviation's significance and value in the aviation infrastructure and the necessity of retaining a level playing field across Europe, including for and within the UK, in respect of common safety regulations and access. Moreover, the EBAA will continue to be the voice of business aviation at the European Institutions, representing both individual Members and National Associations. In that respect, nothing would change and we would continue to represent the interests of all our Members, including the UK.

The role of EBAA would be even more important in a post-Brexit world in fighting for the interests of the whole business aviation community, including the UK, whose specific interests are generally synonymous with the rest of Europe's.


There are some urgent clarifications to be made as to exactly how a post-Brexit UK would fit into EASA and the EU's Single European Sky, but it is clear that EBAA will have a key role in influencing rulemaking for the benefit of the whole sector, including countries outside the EU. We will continue to protect the interests of the whole sector, as we always have done, because aviation is a global business.

What are your goals and vision for the organisation and European Business Aviation in general?

I've joined EBAA at a lucky time. We have a good story to tell about the growth in business aviation in Europe and some good progress towards our ultimate goal of proportionate legislation and regulation that benefits all users of Europe's airways. We need to ensure that decision makers at all levels see business aviation as a necessary, sustainable and valued transport option for some very demanding customers who otherwise might skip some travel or travel destinations altogether, to the detriment of local economies.

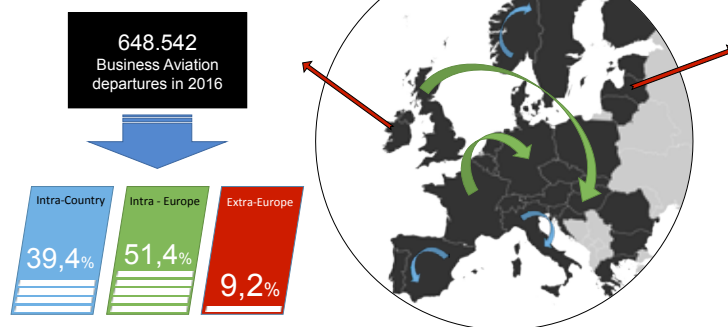
We connect 25,000 city pairs that airlines don't, thus ensuring vital links to regions. Business aviation represents 7% of European aviation and has an economic impact of EUR 100 million per year, but it's under appreciated. We're going to try to change that.

This sector also provides vital air ambulance flights - some 1,200 medical flights every month. It serves hospitals and disaster victims and transports medical personnel. So, in addition to serving business, it saves lives and this should be recognised.

We are on the threshold of a new era in the industry. As I said before, we are offering the freedom to choose - giving people more options to be more productive. 

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Split per Flight Destination



Long Range Destinations

