

Business as Usual for Budapest Airport



Following the events of Friday 03 February, when the entire Malév fleet was grounded, Budapest Airport is pleased to report that its Crisis Control Center successfully managed the immediate effects of the national airline's collapse, ensuring that stranded passengers were attended to in the best possible way.

"We are, of course, saddened by the collapse of Malév," said Jost Lammers, CEO of Budapest Airport. "But we now move into the post-Malév era with a degree of optimism. We are open for business as usual and would like to thank the airlines who have already stepped in to operate some of the routes previously flown by Malév - we will continue to work with these airlines and others, with a view to offering sensible long-term solutions."

Airlines including British Airways, Air France, KLM, Germanwings and Brussels Airlines were quick off the mark by increasing frequency on their existing Budapest routes. At the same time not only did Lufthansa & Wizz Air increase capacity on some of their existing routes from Budapest, they also announced new routes to help market recovery. Air Berlin also responded quickly with the launch of a new service between Budapest and Berlin commencing on 06 February. Not forgetting the five new routes being started by Ryanair in March, the post-Malév era is well underway: "We remain committed to be the best airport in the Central/Eastern European region," said Jost Lammers. "We are particularly interested in airlines wishing to use Budapest as a base and have launched a special route recovery incentive programme to attract the most appropriate operators."

Budapest Airport's 2012 plans are being re-evaluated as part of an expected business review, which will result in some long and short term changes. In the coming days, the airport's airline development team will work with airlines wishing to add Budapest to their network plans, indicating that employment impacts can also be mitigated if the right solutions for market recovery are found as soon as possible.

The operator of Budapest Airport, Budapest Airport Zrt, is keen to see passenger recovery buoyed by the Hungarian authorities removing obstacles currently preventing airlines from picking up the lost Malév capacity. For example, there are four regulated agreements which allow only one Hungarian airline to fly routes to Turkey, Israel, Russia and the Ukraine. On flights to and from these destinations, only Malév had the right to fly. It is imperative that the Hungarian authorities move quickly to close these gaps; otherwise the road to recovery will be much slower. The management of Budapest Airport will fully support the government in moving quickly if necessary.

The city of Budapest is a fantastic short break destination and will continue to be a magnet for airlines to fly to and from. Budapest Airport remains committed to returning to passenger growth levels as soon as possible.

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