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Turkish Airlines (THY) celebrated the arrival of its first six Boeing Next-Generation 737-800s today. The flag carrier for Turkey selected 49 of the advanced-technology jetliners in October 1997. In a unique delivery, all six airplanes left Seattle one-half hour apart to arrive in Istanbul for festivities marking this event. The delivery of these airplanes adds to the significance of Turkish achievement during the 75th Anniversary celebration of the Turkish Republic.

Today's arrival ceremony took place at Atatürk Airport with Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz in attendance. The United States was represented by Mark Parris, ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, and Caroline Higgins, U.S. consul general in Istanbul.

Cem Kozlu and Yusuf Bolayirli, chief executive officer and president of Turkish Airlines respectively, led the THY delegation. Seddik Belyamani, executive vice president - Sales headed the visiting group from Boeing. In honor of the Turkish Republic's proud achievements, all the guests were taken on an aerial tour of the Black Sea region.

"THY has been very successful with its current fleet of 30 737-400s and -500s," Belyamani said. "The airline recognizes that the acquisition of Next-Generation 737-800 jetliners will significantly enhance its operation. We are proud of our long association with Turkish Airlines and are looking forward to strengthening our partnership with the Turkish aerospace industry."

The 737-800, an advanced-technology, stretched version of the current 737-400, delivers more value to airlines in the form of reliability, simplicity, and reduced operating and maintenance costs. Each Turkish Airlines 737-800 will be configured for 155 seats, including 20 in business class with first class standards, and 135 in tourist class.

THY will use its new 737s to expand its routes throughout Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Central Asian Republics and the Far East.

The Next-Generation 737 program is the fastest-selling commercial airplane program in history with more than 1000 sold since the program was launched in 1993. Total orders for the entire 737 family number more than 4000, making it the most successful commercial jetliner of all time.

Based in Istanbul, THY has been an operator of Boeing airplanes since the early 1940s, with the incorporation of DC-3/C-47 airliners into its fleet. THY entered the jet age in the early 1970s with Boeing 727-200, DC-9 and DC-10 airplanes.

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