Neos First to Fly Boeing 737-800 with Winglets in Italy

Boeing this week delivered a new Boeing 737-800 jetliner with winglets to Neos, a recently formed charter airline based in Milan, Italy. The airplane is the first 737-800 to enter the fleet of an Italian airline and the first 737-800 with winglets to operate out of Italy.

Neos will begin operations with its first 737-800 this month. A second 737-800 is scheduled for delivery in May. Both airplanes are leased from GE Capital Aviation Services (GECAS). The carrier will use the airplanes to serve the short- and medium-range charter market, flying out of bases in Milan, Bologna and Verona. In summer, Neos will target Mediterranean destinations, and in the winter, sunshine destinations such as Egypt and the Cape Verde Islands off the coast of Africa.

Neos is a joint venture of Finanziaria di Partecipazioni S.p.A. (IFIL) of Italy and Preussag of Germany. IFIL also owns Alpitour, the largest tour operator in Italy. Preussag owns airlines in Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Scandinavia and Poland plus several tour operators in Europe.

"When we began evaluating airplanes for our new airline, we found the Boeing 737-800 was the one model of the size we needed that had the range to fly non-stop to important island destinations off the west coast of Africa," said Carlo Stradiotti, Neos managing director. The 737-800 also weighs less, so we can take off with a heavier load -- and it will provide us a large savings in fuel."

Stradiotti said the 737-800 also is the predominant airplane model at Hapag-Lloyd, Preussag's German airline, and that the fleet commonality could offer potential joint maintenance and training opportunities in the future.

Adding winglets, which are upward-swept extensions on the tips of the wings, to a 737-800 can reduce fuel burn by up to 4 percent on flights longer than 1,150 miles (1,850 kilometers). They also can increase the distance the airplane flies by up to 150 miles (240 kilometers), improve the takeoff performance, increase the amount of weight the airplane can carry by up to 6,613 pounds (3 metric tons), reduce noise on takeoffs and lower engine maintenance costs.

Boeing developed the winglet technology in cooperation with Aviation Partners, Inc.

With winglets, an all-new wing and updated liquid-crystal displays in the flight deck, the 737-800 has the most advanced-design technology in the single-aisle jetliner market. The Neos 737-800s, which will seat 184 passengers, also have an interior modeled after the spacious interior of the award-winning Boeing 777.

The 737-800s are powered by new CFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of Snecma of France and General Electric of the United States. The engines meet community noise restrictions well below Stage 3 limits and below anticipated Stage 4 limits.

"The new generation of 737s were designed to be sensitive to the environment," said Heiner Wilkens, senior vice president and general manager of Boeing in Europe. "The takeoff benefits of winglets allow 737-800s flying in and out of European airports even more of an environmental edge."

GECAS is a premier provider of fleet, financing and productivity solutions to the global aviation industry. GECAS offers financing for short-term and long-term equipment needs, acquisition financing, aircraft remarketing and sale/leaseback arrangements. GECAS is headquartered in Stamford, Conn.

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