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Boeing [NYSE: BA] and European carrier Hapag-Lloyd Flug have finalized an order for 10 Boeing Next-Generation 737 passenger airplanes, making Hapag-Lloyd an all-Boeing operator.

The new airplanes are part of the carrier's fleet standardization plans, which includes replacement of its aging A310 with the advanced-technology 737-800.

"We are taking advantage of the favorable exchange rate to buy the most cost-efficient aircraft available at a competitive price," said Sebastian Ebel, member of the TUI Group board. Ebel manages the TUI Group's airlines. "Standardizing our fleet with the 737-800 also enables Hapag-Lloyd to reduce operational, maintenance and service costs."

Hapag Lloyd has experienced the 737's superior performance first hand. Its reliability and technological capabilities make it the best airplane for the airline and its passengers, the airline said.

The order is valued at \$655 million at list prices. Hapag-Lloyd begins taking delivery during the first quarter of 2006. The orders, signed in late December, are accounted for in Boeing's 2004 sales figures.

Hapag-Lloyd, a member of the TUI Travel Group, is based in Hanover Langenhagen, Germany, and has one of the newest and most modern fleets in the European skies. The airline offers 552 flights per week from 21 departure airports to 39 destinations in nine countries.

The new 737s will be fitted with advanced-technology Blended Winglets, which reduce aerodynamic drag. The 737-800 with Blended Winglets is 1,500 pounds lighter, can fly 260 nautical miles farther, 1,100 feet higher and climb to 35,000 feet 3.2 minutes faster while carrying 12 more passengers than competing models.

"Hapag-Lloyd's order reinforces the value that airlines attach to the 737's exceptional technology, reliability and environmental performance," said Marlin Dailey, vice president for European Sales, Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

The Next-Generation 737 is the fastest-selling and fastest delivered airplane of all time. It's also the newest and most technologically advanced and efficient single-aisle airplane in its class. Boeing has delivered more than 1,600 Next-Generation 737s.

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For further information: Mike Tull Brussels: +32 477 557 667 Sandy Angers Seattle: +1 425 965 9380 Beatrice Bracklo Berlin: +49 30 77377 106