

Frankfurt-Hahn adding new cargo carriers

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Chinese carriers Yangtze River Express and Navitrans; the new Chinese-Turkish combo MyCargo; and Japan's Nippon Cargo Airlines have all recently signed up to provide cargo service to Frankfurt-Hahn Airport. This new intake will add another 10 flights a week to the airport's freighter schedule, reportedly providing the potential to increase cargo traffic by as much as 10,000 tonnes a month.

The moves, according to Jorg Schumacher, managing director of Frankfurt-Hahn, are a benefit of the night-flight ban imposed at its larger neighbor, Frankfurt-Main. "The confirmation of the night-flight ban at Frankfurt-Main means that many airlines will now have to find new solutions and develop alternative models for their cargo business," he told *Air Cargo World*.

Shanghai-based Yangtze River Express started operating through Hahn with a B747-400F service to Beijing, which it plans to increase to three times a week. Navitrans initiated a weekly service linking New York, via Hahn, with Chengdu, using B747-400F equipment operated by Evergreen International Airlines.

"Since our flight from New York arrives in Germany at night and leaves again at night, it was obvious that we should run this route via Hahn airport," Luhua Dai, Navitrans' general manager for Germany, told *Air Cargo World*. The flight has since been increased to a twice-weekly rotation.

Representatives for new joint venture MyCargo said they will use Frankfurt-Hahn to operate both scheduled and charter services. NCA left Frankfurt-Main a few years ago, but has chosen to re-enter the German market by way of Hahn, reasoning that a night schedule will provide it with a more competitive edge over its rivals. A contract to add a further U.S.-connecting carrier is expected to be concluded shortly.

The new additions, and the possibility of even more carriers, are evidence that Hahn is finally stepping out from under the shadow of Frankfurt-Main. But rather than competing with Frankfurt-Main, Schumacher said Hahn can play a complementary role. He points to Aeroflot and Etihad Airways, both of which have located their freighter operations at Hahn, while continuing to serve Frankfurt-Main with passenger flights.

"These examples show that both airports can complement each other on a practical level," he said, "and that cooperation is possible."

Schumacher added that the presence of four new cargo carriers means that Frankfurt-Hahn is healthy, despite reports of potential insolvency. "We're a long way from being in the situation others say we're in," he told *Air Cargo World*. "The airport has had to go through some difficult times, but we've managed to overcome them. And these contracts with our new cargo customers show that things are moving forward."