

KLM cityhopper & KLM uk: Two of a Kind

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KLM Cityhopper and KLM UK teaming up

Since April last, KLM Cityhopper (formed in 1998 by the merger of NLM and Netherlines) and KLM UK (the former Air UK) joined into one company.

In an evening lecture (organised by Aerius) at the University of Amsterdam by Mrs Elfriede van Galen, Managing Director at KLM Cityhopper and KLM UK, it became clear that the joining of the companies is not as simple as it may appear. AVIANET was present at the lecture.

Especially in these harsh times for the aviation industry, it has become an important issue for every airline to survive and guarantee its continuity. This is also true for KLM Cityhopper, which is a 100 percent subsidiary of KLM and functions as a feeder carrier in KLM's network. Still, KLM Cityhopper has many competitors on different fronts in Europe, for instance Eurowings, a German regional airline, and EasyJet and Ryanair on the low cost market.



The former Air UK. Fokker 100 arriving at Schiphol. Photo Hubert Croes

Mrs. Van Galen also explained that if the (costs of the) feeder flights for KLM are to be kept on a stable level, KLM Cityhopper will have to carry out other activities as well. Therefore, KLM Cityhopper is studying the possibilities of initialising new activities such as:

- Ad hoc flights
- Sight seeing flights
- Medical charters
- Business charters
- Wet leasing aircraft

However, the focus will remain on the feeder role in the KLM network.

KLM UK also fulfilled a feeder role in

comprised the regional branded feeder KLM UK (the "blue part" operated by Air UK) and BUZZ (the "yellow part"), which was the low cost operator. BUZZ is recently sold to Ryanair, and it became apparent to combine the operations of both KLM Cityhopper and KLM UK in one entity.

The advantages are clear as the two operators use a similar fleet of Fokker 50, Fokker 70 and Fokker 100, leading to cost saving through synergy.

Mrs. Van Galen point out that in combining the two operations, many obstacles became apparent, mostly caused by differences in national regulations. In first instance, it was necessary to keep the KLM UK aircraft flying under British registration (G-) to safeguard the air operating license as well as the lease contracts. Also, many procedures have to be standardised, for instance the colours of fire extinguishers differs in the UK and the Netherlands and they should now all be painted in the same colour. It became clear that integration will take a while to be accomplished. However, the company was working hard to have a mixed deployment of ground personnel from 1 September, while for the cabin crew this should be accomplished by 1 November.

We wish the new KLM Cityhopper all the best!



KLM Cityhopper Fokker 70 reaching for the skies. Photo Hubert Croes