

## Day 2 Report

### ERA General Assembly 2013, sun still shining on Salzburg

The second day of the ERA GA opened with the Airline and Airport CEOs' Breakfast. Sponsored by Salzburg Airport, media delegates were invited to attend and Roland Hermann and Simon McNamara gave a welcome address at what proved to be a popular event.

Following the breakfast, an interactive workshop on Instantaneous media attention – the impact on business was held. The workshop advised that threat mitigation strategies, social media legal constraints and adding positive value to operations were invaluable lessons to learn. Attendees were also made aware by experts from the aviation industry working in both legal and disaster management sectors that the impact of social media means that companies must be pr savvy 24 hours a day. A number of press conferences were also held throughout the day and included presentations by Bombardier, GE Aviation and Mitsubishi.

At the first session of the conference the out-going President of ERA, Marc Lamidey, and Simon McNamara, Director General ERA, then gave a presentation on the state of the industry. While Lamidey noted that the aviation industry is anything if predictable he added that he is very positive about the future of both the regional airline industry and ERA and their ability to adapt to adverse situations. McNamara was also realistic about the issues facing regional aviation in Europe. However, he, too, was positive about the future of ERA and its members. McNamara said that ERA is stepping up its game and will continue to defend and support the industry.

Passenger rights, crew flight time limitations, air traffic management and emissions trading continue to cause frustrations, noted McNamara but, he continues, ERA will continue to lobby hard for its members on these issues. While conceding that the ahead road might be challenging for regional aviation, McNamara was very clear that both ERA and its members have a great future and that working together is key to success.

The second session focused on aviation's rapid evolution and its enormous contribution to Europe's economy through €475bn and more than 7.8m jobs. However, the key, as was discussed in the session was how to sustain this remarkable industry in the face of increased regulation and competition. Key to a sustainable future, discussed panel members Jesper Rungholm, Cathal O'Connell, Frank Brenner, Philippe Micouleau and Michael Standar is the continual development of an intelligent and efficient infrastructure system and a belief among decision makers that investment is crucial. As the second day of conference came to a close delegates looked forward to the evening's gala dinner where airline and airport award winners were announced.

ERA presented awards to ERA Airline of the Year in Bronze, Silver and Gold categories, the ERA Airport Achievement Award and the ERA Award for Personal Excellence. This year's winners are listed below.

#### **The GOLD Winner: Binter Canarias**

Simon McNamara, Director General ERA, commented: "This airline is an outstanding example of the fact that there is a bigger difference between the good and bad companies than between the good and bad times. Despite a dramatic economic downturn in its home market, the airline was able to close 2012 with a considerable profit. It has successfully entered new markets and embarked on an interesting diversification of its network. A trend setter in the airline business."

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### **The SILVER Winner: bmi regional**

“This airline has managed to survive and develop through a dramatic period of transformation,” commented McNamara. “It’s re-launch and cut-over to a stand-alone airline was effectively executed in a short timeframe. It has established itself as a reliable airline with an expanding network.”

### **The BRONZE Winner: Aer Arann**

The airline has achieved a remarkable “rebirth” through a new franchise agreement. It has been able to attract new investors and raise new capital, said the judging panel. “This expresses a confidence in the airline’s future and its management capabilities. The airline’s campaign to pull traffic from surrounding cities in the UK to the US through a major European hub has been a clever move.”

### **ERA Airport Achievement Award: Budapest Airport**

“The winner has achieved a very fast recovery after losing its major carrier,” said McNamara. “Airport management has reacted swiftly to create new business opportunities and has succeeded in rebuilding the lost network in less than a year. At the same time passenger service has developed in a positive direction, including the improvement of departure punctuality. An outstanding achievement!”

### **The ERA Award for Personal Excellence: François Debost, deputy VP fleet management, HOP!**

“The award’s recipient, François Debost, is renowned for his enthusiasm and technical knowledge within the industry,” commented Simon McNamara, Director General ERA. “He has attended ERA’s Advisory Groups since 2002 and was elected vice chair of ERA’s Operations Group in 2004. Debost’s willingness to assist and advise member colleagues and the Directorate led to his election to Chairman of the ERA Operations Group in August 2005 and he is now the longest serving Chairman of any group and an invaluable expert to call on.”