Malta, November 21, 2022

Challenge Airlines MT carries history on its first flight

Challenge Airlines MT has brought back to Malta the Flemish Tapestries in its inaugural fight.



"320 years ago, these valuable Flemish Tapestries made their way by ship from Belgium to Malta. Today, we are honoured and delighted to have been chosen to return them again to their home in St John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta," Yossi Shoukroun, CEO of Challenge Group, commented on the occasion of the welcoming ceremony held on 15 November 2022, to celebrate the transportation of the Flemish Tapestries to Malta, from Liège, Belgium, where the historic masterpieces had undergone meticulous and careful restoration.

In a similar vein, their return journey was planned in collaboration with Maltese government departments and the private sector, with the same dedication and attention to detail that characterises all of Challenge Group's logistics services. For Challenge Airlines MT, the transport of these priceless tapestries signified both a celebration of history as well as the creation of a new historic moment: the valuable cargo was the first to be carried by the airline on its inaugural flight, having been awarded its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) by Transport Malta on 01 November 2022. As a mark of respect and in honour of the occasion, Challenge Airlines MT provided both the flight as well as logistical support.

Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade, Ian Borg, emphasized the joint commitment of all those involved: "It is a pleasure for us to see that, with a strong intervention from our Embassy in Belgium, through Clint Tanti and the rest of the employees, we were able to bring these tapestries to Malta without any costs for the Maltese Government. Above all, these can now be enjoyed by the public and the tourists who choose to visit the St. John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta."

Minister for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government, Owen Bonnici, outlined the historic and sentimental value for Malta and its visitors: "These tapestries have been a property of the Co-Cathedral for 350 years. The finished restoration of these tapestries is certainly a step forward for the wider appreciation as well as a unique experience for those who will see them in the coming years."

For Challenge Group, the Flemish Tapestries coincidentally have additional significance: "Not only do we have the utmost respect for this priceless and unique cargo but, in a way, these tapestries also reflect Challenge Group,

since they depict Christian art scenes from Jerusalem, Israel, and were carefully woven over a period of four years in Belgium for Grand Master Fra Ramon Perellós y Roccaful of Malta. Hence, they combine the three countries where Challenge Group has set up hubs and for which we hold Air Operator Certificates." added Yossi Shoukroun. He went on to thank the Maltese authorities for Challenge Airlines MT's AOC.

Challenge Airlines MT, registered as 9H, owns a fleet of two B767-300ER, each capable of uplifting a payload of 60 tonnes. Ten pilots are stationed at the Group's headquarter in Malta, ready to operate regular flights between Liège (LGG), Tel Aviv (TLV), Sharjah (SHJ), New York (JFK), and Indian Sub-Continent (ISC), in the coming future.

About Challenge Group

Challenge Group is a unique, international air cargo conglomeration offering tailored air freight industry solutions from handling, air and ground logistics, to aviation services, for a wide range of industries and commodities.

Challenge Group employs 850 people across three airlines (Challenge Airlines IL in Israel, Challenge Airlines BE in Belgium, Challenge Airlines MT in Malta), a commercial division (Challenge Air Cargo) in Malta, a ground handling company (Challenge Handling in Liege, Belgium), a European road feeder provider (Challenge Logistics in Liege, Belgium), an aircraft and parts leasing division (Challenge Aviation), and a comprehensive line maintenance provider (Challenge Technic). The company has trebled its capacity over the past four years and now handles 300,000+ tonnes of cargo per year.