

Cargolux: investing in security

There has been an increasing emphasis placed on the security measures adopted for the screening of air cargo in recent years. The industry has recognised that passengers, whose bags have been screened, are also exposed to the risk of a terrorist bomb being infiltrated into cargo consignments. Yet, all freighter aircraft are not subject to the same procedures. Cargolux is one such airline. **Philip Baum** visited their home base in Luxembourg to look at their security concerns and to examine their response.



The concept that cargo screening is only designed to save passenger lives is an anathema to Cargolux. Nor is their security action taken simply for insurance purposes. All-freight aircraft also have crews and fly over populated areas - Cargolux believes that such potential victims are also owed a duty of care.

At first glance one might think the threat posed is inconsequential. Based in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, their Boeing 747-400's (they have a fleet composed of 10 such aircraft) seemed somewhat incongruous with their surroundings. Compared to the airports serving most of the European capitals, Luxembourg has the feel of a provincial airport. Perhaps that's not surprising. After all, Luxembourg is a small country. Yet size isn't everything. Luxembourg is a founder member of the European Union and the seat of community organisations such as the European Court of Justice, the European Investment Bank and the General Secretariat Offices of the European Parliament.

According to the local authority, the airport is also the seventh largest air cargo centre on the European continent. The cargo terminal is 55,000m² in size and has a capacity of 500,000 tons.

Cargolux is by far the largest cargo operator in Luxembourg. It has, since 1970, been serving the world and is now Europe's largest all-cargo international

airline, operating out of 63 offices in 42 countries. Even as one enters their headquarters one can sense the truly international flavour of the carrier. It employs 48 different nationalities and, serving their 10 aircraft, there are 17 different nationalities of cockpit crew of whom the largest contingent are, like the company's management, from Iceland.

Cargolux, like all other operators at Luxembourg airport, is subject to security inspection; the government has commissioned Bureau Veritas, a French company, to perform such tasks for them. Bureau Veritas also carry out airworthiness inspections; to date they have certified over 10,000 aircraft. The FAA also inspects the airport periodically. On June 8th 1999 they certified Luxembourg as a Category I airport.

Yet Cargolux is a firm believer in self audit. Internally, they have created their own security department that is headed up by Frank Munnich. Munnich, an Englishman, has been with the company for ten years and is from a crewing background. He drafted the airline's own Security Manual (annexed to which is the Grand-Ducal Regulation of 9th June 1976 that defines security measures at Luxembourg airport), the requirements of which have now been implemented. Furthermore, Munnich carries out regular inspections of the airline's operations around the world and assesses the security risks the airline might face when flying to a new destination.

The range of cargo to be transported is vast. Flowers, computers and equipment for the oil industry make up a considerable percentage of the freight carried. Villeroy & Boch, the Luxembourg-based bone china and porcelain manufacturers, are key customers. So too are Goodyear, TDK and Astra (the



satellite manufacturers) all of whom have factories in Luxembourg. Trucks arrive daily from all over the rest of Europe, delivering goods for export to locations around the globe. Indeed, there is little that Cargolux can't transport – from sea lions to rhinoceroses and from small aircraft to sports cars. The only thing they don't transport are people! The only passengers that are transported are airline employees travelling on duty, members of the Luxembourg Royal Family and the trainers that accompany race horses.

From a security perspective they have the advantage of dealing exclusively with known shippers. However, the airline is conscious of the fact that it faces a wide variety of risks, including hijacking. Accordingly training is provided to all members of staff on the security issues relevant to their position. Munnich is currently developing a CBT course for all crew.

Even in crew recruitment, security is a consideration. One-third of a new-hirés initial assessment will be based on a psychological profile that will, hopefully,

identify not only their potential ability to handle a mid-air emergency, but also their general stability. In the light of recent speculation regarding the SilkAir and Egyptair crashes, it is pleasing to note such concern.

The headquarters building is secured by Securicor, who have also been tasked with safe-guarding the company's newest purchase – an aircraft simulator. Overseas, Cargolux's handling agents make the necessary security arrangements, yet they are still subject to audit by the headquarters security department.

Munnich's greatest challenge is getting people to believe that there is a security risk. It's all too easy to believe that Luxembourg, a country with a very low crime rate, is immune from terrorist activity. Yet it is an important centre of European activity and the places Cargolux operates to can not be branded 'safe' quite as easily. The airline is investing in security and the message is sinking in. All-cargo only equates with safe-cargo when you take steps to ensure that it is so.

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