

The air carrier is planning to launch the Amsterdam-Calgary flights next year. The first Airbus 380 air plane, which will lead to the improvement of the fuel consumption per passenger and the reduction of the CO2 emissions, will be added to the AIR FRANCE fleet in 2009, Alexandru Dobrescu, country manager AIR FRANCE KLM Romania tells Bucharest Herald.

BH: What investments has AIR FRANCE KLM Romania made in 2008?

Alexandru Dobrescu: In 2008 we consolidated the AIR FRANCE KLM position on the Romanian market. The investments targeted first of all the improvement of the performances of the two Internet websites created for our customers. The expansion of the electronic services use, offers our clients access to a full range of services, from booking to board pass printing, available all day. This step is part of our plan to simplify the passenger's route, offering him or her at the same time, access to complete information, right from the source.

BH: What new services for customers have been launched on the market this year?

Alexandru Dobrescu: We always pay special attention to our customers and the products development take into account their increasing comfort needs. SEAT PLUS, the electronic service that allows our passengers to choose a preferential seat in the plane, for instance a seat with a larger space for feet, very comfortable in the case of a long haul flight, is one of our newest services. Another service is Bluenity, the first socialising website for travelers, launched by an air carrier. On this communication platform our passengers can exchange information about a certain destination, impressions and useful advice.

BH: What is the impact of the financial crisis on the air carriers, considering that both businesspeople and regular passengers have started to cut their travel budgets?

Alexandru Dobrescu : The demand has slowed down at group level in the past trimester, but the results remain positive, with an 83 per cent loading degree, the highest in the industry. Next year the first Airbus 380 air plane, which will lead to the improvement of the fuel consumption per passenger and the reduction of the CO2 emissions, will be added to the AIR FRANCE fleet. On the Romanian market, both AIR FRANCE and KLM remain in the positive zone as regards the passenger traffic. At the end of October 2008, the traffic was 9 per cent higher against the same period of 2007. At group level the passenger traffic increased by 0.8 per cent, compared to last year and the turnover reached 13 billion Euro in the first semester of 2008-2009 financial year.

BH: What is your perspective on the evolution of this market next year, in the context of the financial crisis?

Alexandru Dobrescu : AIR FRANCE KLM will maintain a competitive product, in terms of quality and in terms of commercial offer on the Romanian market, like in the past. The fidelity programs: Flying Blue for individual customers and for small and medium enterprises, Voyageur Rewards and BlueBiz complete our offer.

BH: How is the traffic during the winter holidays?

Alexandru Dobrescu : The traffic soars during the winter holidays. On the one hand the business travel traffic drops and on the other hand the number of tourists traveling abroad for winter holidays increases. This happens to the first 10 days of the new year. The Romanians prefer Paris and Amsterdam. But the destinations list does not end here. Besides classical destinations like Lisbon and New York, the customers chose exotic destinations in the Caribbean Islands and in the Mexic Gulf, such as: Havana, Rio de Janeiro, Punta Cana, Santo Domingo, Aruba, Cancun, and in Asia: Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Bangkok and Hong Kong.

BH: What were the most trargeted destinations this year, by AIR FRANCE-KLM cusomers and what new flights will be added next year to company's portfolio?

Alexandru Dobrescu : The passengers traveled to classical destinations such as Paris, Amsterdam, New York, but also China, Shanghai, Beijing, and South America, especially Buenos Aires and Mexico. Next summer we will launch the Amsterdam-Calgary flights.