



RIGA AIRPORT MAINTAINS ITS STRATEGIC GOAL OF BECOMING A NORTHERN EUROPEAN AVIATION HUB

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Despite the crisis in the aviation sector caused by the novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, Riga Airport maintains its strategic future goal to become a Northern European air traffic hub, the Chairperson of the Airport Board Laila Odiņa emphasized at Riga Aviation Forum on Thursday.

"This crisis has given us some extra time to prepare for new challenges. By investing in the development of state-of-the-art infrastructure solutions today, in the future it will be possible to organize work more efficiently and reduce costs per serviced passenger or aircraft, which will boost the Airport's competitiveness both in terms of costs and environmental sustainability," says the Airport manager.



This summer, with the support of the Cohesion Fund and own funds, a number of large-scale investment projects worth more than 15 million euros have been implemented at Riga Airport: the Airport has reconstructed and upgraded a part of the runway and taxiways in a length of more than 11 kilometres, built a helipad and new aircraft and helicopter stands. These investments will not only enable Riga Airport to increase its operational capacity and offer its customers better services, but will also make the Airport more environmentally friendly, reducing CO2 emissions and saving resources.

The new cargo apron of Riga Airport with underground hydrant systems and multi-category aircraft stands will start operating this autumn, which together with the future development of the cargo logistics centre will allow Riga Airport to double the volume of cargo handled, reaching 60 000 tonnes per year. The international logistics company DHL has already started the construction of its regional parcel handling and sorting centre in the territory of the future RIX Cargo City. Another 15 000 square metres of land where it is possible to develop cargo handling and servicing warehouses in an area of up to 9 000 square metres are waiting for investors.

The Airport is also continuing work on the new passenger terminal project so that the project can start as soon as the company's business results allow. "The Airport is expected to restore the number of passengers served before the crisis in a few years. This is also confirmed by the development plans of airBaltic's updated business plan. Insufficient Airport capacity cannot be an obstacle to the implementation of these development plans in Riga," Odiņa points out. She also emphasized that the new epidemiological safety requirements are likely to persist in the long term and that the Airport will need additional space to implement these standards without compromising Airport capacity and service quality.



As Odiņa emphasized in the discussions at Riga Aviation Forum, both now and when planning future development, the Airport pays great attention to sustainable solutions, including assessing the possibility of attracting structural fund projects that will be available to Latvia in the next European Union budget planning period until 2027. This EU funding should be used to purchase both sewage infrastructure and equipment that uses alternative fuels in its work, such as electric apron buses, specialized apron equipment and electric cars to be used on a daily basis to perform Airport functions.

"If a company thinks about sustainability in all its aspects – environmental, social and economic – it becomes more efficient in processes and use of resources, acquires motivated and loyal staff and becomes more attractive to future employees. This improves the operating results and thus gives a direct benefit to the business," emphasizes the Chairperson of the Board of Riga Airport.

The Airport is among the sustainability veterans in Latvia – the Airport has been participating in the Sustainability Index assessment since 2011 and for the second year in a row has the highest – Platinum status. "This year, for the first time, the public will have an opportunity to get acquainted with the Airport's Sustainability Report that is drawn up in accordance with the international Global Reporting Index (GRI) standard and reflects the Airport's performance in the most important aspects of sustainability," said Odi?a.

Riga Airport presentation on Riga Aviation Forum 2020 "Riga Airport Investments and Development in a New Condition" <https://youtu.be/VzjamjydEpk>

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