



ANKARA WILL BECOME THIRD TURKISH AIRLINES HUB

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Rapidly growing [Turkish Airlines](#) is developing the nation's capital airport, Ankara Esenboğa International Airport (ESB), into its third hub. Its two other major hubs are in Istanbul—Atatürk and (IST) Sabiha Gökçen (SAW) airports.

“We want to make Ankara a hub for scheduled domestic and international operations,” CEO Temel Kotil told ATW. He said there is already a small network existing in Ankara. “At the moment we have 30 aircraft based there; the number could rise to 50,” Kotil said. “A small hub makes no sense. We see also potential in Izmir.”

Most of the current Ankara-based aircraft are operated by Turkish Airlines' low-cost subsidiary AnadoluJet. AnadoluJet has wet-leased 28 Boeing 737NGs from Sunexpress, a 50/50% joint

venture of Turkish Airlines and Lufthansa. “This number (of wet-leased aircraft) could grow further,” Kotil said.

SunExpress has 69 Boeing 737s—including the 28 leased by AnadoluJet. More than 20% of SunExpress business in 2014 came from wet-lease contracts, former [CEO Paul Schwaiger told ATW in February](#).

On regional routes, Turkish cooperates with BoraJet, which operates a fleet of five Embraer 190s. [BoraJet just took delivery](#) of three Embraer E-195s from the Regional Aircraft Group of GECAS.

Kotil said that further improvements such as terminal extensions are currently under way at IST. “We are optimizing our business at Ataturk.” For example, Turkish Airlines is reducing flights on highly frequented domestic routes such as to Antalya or Izmir, and operating [those flights] with Airbus A330 and Boeing 777-300ER widebodies instead of Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 narrowbodies. This allows for additional slots at Ataturk.

“This is what we are doing from day to day. And we will do more (using widebody aircraft in place of narrowbodies on short-haul routes). Turkish Airlines currently operates 1,200 flights per day, but we are still a small airline,” Kotil added.

Next year, the Star Alliance member is expecting to take delivery of around 40 additional aircraft. Turkish Airlines has 290 aircraft in its fleet currently.

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