BEECHCRAFT IS BACK, FIRED UP FOR FUTURE

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Beechcraft is readying its EBACE debut with the release of an analysis of the turboprop business aircraft market in Europe.

The former Hawker Beechcraft emerged from bankruptcy protection in February as a manufacturer of turboprop and piston-powered aircraft, having ditched the Hawker business jet line. It is continuing to maintain and upgrade all the legacy Beechcraft and Hawker models.

The study reveals that despite the global economic slowdowns between 2008 and 2012, deliveries of business jets and turboprops rose by more than 2% to 1,196 aircraft. This compares with 861 aircraft during 2003-2007 - the latter 12 months representing the height of the sales boom for business aviation.

The analysis reveals there are now 3,773 business aircraft in Europe. With a fleet of 621 aircraft, Germany has the largest market share with more than 16%. The UK, with 563 business aircraft, has a 17% share of Europe's installed base. This is followed by France with 9% - 544 aircraft.

"Despite the economic challenges facing Europe, our research shows that it remains a strong market for business aviation, even during the economic crisis," says Scott Plumb, Beechcraft vice-president of sales for Europe, Middle East and Africa. "Business leaders and entrepreneurs have understood the importance of seeing their clients and operations on a regular basis, and having the flexibility of their own business aircraft helps make that possible."

Jets account for 70% of the region's business aircraft fleet, according to the research, but Beechcraft says turboprop popularity is growing. "The number delivered to Europe during 2008-2012 was 37% higher than during the period 2003-2007. Furthermore, the King Air 200/300 [turboprop twin] platform is the most flown business aircraft in Europe," it adds.

Swiss role for Dauphin

Helicopter brokerage Heli-asset has sold the first Eurocopter EC155 B1 Dauphin (MDN 6795) into Switzerland.

Zurich-based business aviation charter operator HeliLink, owned by RC Aviation of Germany, took delivery of the 2008-built model, configured with eight VIP seats and newly registered as HB-ZOL, on 14 May.

It will be available for third-party charter with immediate effect, joining an existing EC120B1 in the fleet.

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