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## Assistair expands FBO services within the Spanish Mediterranean

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Assistair Business Aviation Handling the fixed base operation (FBO) division of the Mallorca based aviation company Assistair Group, has announced the addition of two new FBOs to its existing Palma, Barcelona El Prat and Valencia airport bases. The new bases at Gerona and Ibiza airports have been opened in response to demand from existing Assistair customers who fly in and out of the destinations regularly. The facilities, which opened in late June, reflect a continued growth of the Assistair business “Whilst others are being conservative in their development in the current economic climate, we see lots of opportunity for expansion. We are actively looking at other Mediterranean destinations including the South of France and Italy” states Catherine Gaisenband, founder and CEO of the Assistair group.

The existing FBOs handle some 10,000 passengers each year flying in and out of the airports on a range of aircraft from light Citation jets through to heavy aircraft such as Boeing Business Jets. “Generally most of our clients are European, but we have seen a shift in our customer base this year with an increase in the number of Russian, American and Middle Eastern passengers handled. They now account for about 25% of the company’s FBO business” added Catherine. A similar client base is expected to use the new FBOs and it is likely some 2000 passengers will travel through them over the next six months. “The beginning of the year was quiet, however May saw private aviation activity increase” continues Catherine “so we are looking forward to developing the business in Ibiza and Gerona.”

Gerona has seen an increase in requirements from passengers visiting the Costa Brava’s growing industrial areas which Assistair hopes to capitalise on. In Ibiza the additional FBO will sit alongside the existing Assistair Flight Support services operation that is already established working with commercial airlines. Contemporarily styled, with modern design and a fresh feel following the company’s recent rebrand, the new bases’ decor will mirror the Valencia and Palma FBO styling, and will set the tone for any future facilities.

Each operation offers a full range of passenger and crew services including handling, slot coordination, VIP catering, travel arranging, and weather control and flight planning. Passengers will also be able to make the most of international TV channels, and complimentary internet access.

The opening of the new FBOs is part of a longer term strategy to develop a Mediterranean corridor of Assistair FBOs “Our plan is to expand our range of services throughout the Mediterranean, as well as diversifying in our service offering” says Catherine “however it is very important for us that we maintain the personal service levels our customers have come to expect and really value”.

To support their expansion and continued branding strategy Assistair have appointed Emerald Media Spain as their PR agency. “We have invested a lot of time, money and effort in our new brand. Combined with our expansion plans, this makes it the right time to bring in external expertise for our communications to let everybody know about us” says Catherine “we are delighted to work with Emerald as they have the same enthusiasm, energy and passion for aviation as Assistair.”