

Media release
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Helvetic Airways AG
Steinackerstrasse 56
8302 Kloten

Phone +41 (0)44 270 8500
Fax +41 (0)44 270 8501

press@helvetic.com
www.helvetic.com

Coronavirus

Helvetic Airways brings Swiss nationals home from the Canary Islands

Helvetic Airways will be bringing some 200 Swiss travellers home to Switzerland from the Canary Islands in the next few hours. The repatriation flights are being operated on behalf of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern.

The joint operation by the Swiss Confederation and Helvetic Airways is being performed in response to a formal request from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The flights concerned are a further element in the most comprehensive repatriation programme that the FDFA has ever conducted. Over the course of today and tomorrow (Thursday), these Helvetic Airways flights will bring back home to Switzerland some 200 Swiss travellers who are currently on the Canary Islands off the coast of Northwest Africa.

The first such flight departed from Zurich this (Wednesday) morning. The Helvetic Airways aircraft will make a first stop in Las Palmas and a second in Fuerteventura before returning to Zurich, where it is expected to land this evening. "I am very proud, together with our entire crew, to be part of this mission and help bring our fellow Swiss citizens back safely to Switzerland," said Captain Peter Stähli, who is commanding the flight, shortly before departure.

A second such flight will be operated tomorrow (Thursday). The FDFA-chartered Helvetic Airways aircraft will leave Zurich tomorrow morning for the islands of Tenerife and Lanzarote, and should return to Zurich tomorrow evening with some 100 passengers aboard. The crew of around ten cockpit and cabin personnel have all volunteered for these special flight duties.

These repatriation flights are being performed with Helvetic Airways' latest-generation Embraer E190-E2 aircraft, which accommodate up to 110 passengers and have a maximum range of almost 5,300 kilometres. Despite the present suspension of its flight operations, Helvetic Airways is keeping three aircraft ready to perform repatriation and other special flights. Four further Helvetic Airways aircraft could be returned to service within 24 hours.

Helvetic Airways provides a range of short- and medium-haul air services from its Zurich (Switzerland) base. The airline uses its Embraer E190-E1 and -E2 aircraft fleet for scheduled, wet-lease and charter flights. Eight Helvetic Airways Embraer E190s are currently operated on behalf of Swiss International Air Lines under a long-term wet-lease agreement.

The Helvetic Airways workforce numbers some 450 employees. The company also has its own maintenance hangar and operation at Zurich Airport, which is further home to its head office.

Helvetic Airways has been working closely with Horizon Swiss Flight Academy AG (www.horizon.sfa.ch), which is based in Kloten, Switzerland, since 2008. Both companies are part of the Helvetic Airways Group, which is domiciled in Freienbach, Switzerland.



Contact for media inquiries

Mehdi Guenin
press@helvetic.com



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