

Media release
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Coronavirus

Ouagadougou-Zurich marks final Helvetic Airways FDFA-repatriation flight

Helvetic Airways performed its last repatriation flight on behalf of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs today, bringing around a hundred travellers back to Switzerland from Accra (Ghana), Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

The flight arrived at Zurich Airport with some 100 passengers on board at 20:38 local time this evening. The aircraft, Embraer E190-E2 HB-AZB, had taken some 5 hours and 04 minutes for the last leg of its journey, the 4,300 kilometres from Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. The aircraft had left Zurich for Burkina Faso yesterday (Tuesday) afternoon, and had made intermediate pick-up stops in the Ghanaian capital of Accra yesterday and in Abidjan in Côte D'Ivoire today.

With a flight time of 6 hours and 22 minutes, the Zurich-Accra route is also one of the longest flight routes ever carried out by an Embraer E190-E2. Its eight-member crew – three pilots, four cabin attendants and a flying engineer – had all volunteered for this highly unusual deployment.

The joint operation by Helvetic Airways and the Swiss Confederation followed a formal request from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The flight marks the end of Operation #flyinghome, the biggest repatriation programme that the FDFA has ever conducted.

Helvetic Airways has enabled over 400 travellers who had been stranded in Northwest Africa (on the Canary Islands), in North Africa (Algiers) and in West Africa to return to Switzerland in the last few weeks. All these repatriation flights have been operated with the airline's Embraer E190-E2 aircraft, which can transport up to 110 passengers almost 5,300 kilometres.

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.



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