AIRBERLIN BOARD APPOINTS NEW CEO

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airberlin has announced that Thomas Winkelmann (57) will become the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of airberlin group.

Mr. Winkelmann will take over as CEO of Air Berlin PLC from 1 February, 2017, assuming full accountability for all group activities. He will succeed Stefan Pichler, who decided to leave the company after working for two years on the strategic turnaround of the group.

Mr. Pichler achieved this by entering into a wet-lease agreement with the Lufthansa Group for 38 aircraft and through selling the short and medium haul touristic business to Etihad Aviation Group, in order to create a new European leisure airline group in a joint venture with TUI AG. The new airberlin will focus on developing its long haul network out of Berlin and Düsseldorf, with initially 75 aircraft.

Thomas Winkelmann will continue the implementation of these measures to ensure a sustainable and profitable future for airberlin.

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Mr. Winkelmann has over 18 years of experience in the airline industry. He started his career in 1998 with Lufthansa Group, initially accountable for the sales organisation in South America and the Caribbean and subsequently taking over the sales and service organisation as Vice President for North and South America.

From September 2006 until October 2015, he was CEO of the Lufthansa low-cost subsidiary Germanwings. Following the announcement of the integration of Germanwings into Eurowings, Mr. Winkelmann was appointed the Chief Executive Officer of the Lufthansa Hub in Munich.

Dr. Hans-Joachim Körber, Chairman of the Board of Directors for airberlin, said: “We are happy for Thomas Winkelmann, as a proven leader, to join us. He is regarded as one of the most experienced and most respected personalities in the international aviation business. Mr. Winkelmann will reinforce the leadership team of airberlin and will drive the business forward.

“I thank Mr. Pichler for his relentless efforts to turn around the company. I understand that he would like now to return to his home, Australia.”

James Hogan, President and Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Aviation Group and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors added: “Stefan was successful in finding a strategic solution for airberlin and creating a comprehensive restructuring plan for the airline. I wish him the very best for the future.”

Mr. Winkelmann was born in Hagen. He studied Linguistics and Ancient History at the Free University Berlin and at Münster University. He continued his studies at the Free University Berlin as a postgraduate in Business Administration. In 2004, Mr Winkelmann successfully completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School in Boston.

Commenting on his new appointment, Mr. Winkelmann said: “I am excited to be joining the team at airberlin at such a crucial time in its journey to become a new company with a clear focus and a sustainable future.

“I have been extremely impressed by the enthusiasm shown by the staff of airberlin since the announcement of the restructuring and the recognition that there is a need for change. I welcome the opportunity to join such a dedicated team and I am confident that my experience will contribute to a successful new future for airberlin.”

19 DECEMBER 2016

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