

Embracing the future



As the 2018 edition of EBACE concluded, the event once again served as a powerful and forward-looking showcase for the European business aviation industry. Simon Williams shares his thoughts

The Isle of Man Aircraft Registry was represented at the 2018 European Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition by Simon Williams, Director of Civil Aviation and Adrian Tickle, Flight Operations Technical Manager. This very successful event concluded in Geneva on 31st May 2018 and I note that the trade show drew 418 exhibitors which represents an increase on last year. There were 54 aircraft on static display which reflected the broad spectrum of business aviation, including ultra-long-range business jets, turboprops and helicopters. It was great to see a very strong [Isle of Man industry presence](#) at the show as ever.

“This was a decidedly upbeat, optimistic EBACE week, which highlighted the passion and enthusiasm at the heart of the Business Aviation community,” said Juergen Wiese, chairman of EBACE co-organizer, EBAA. *“The show reflected a reverence for the industry’s history, as well as an embrace of its future.”* This was a sentiment shared by Ed Bolen, President & CEO of EBACE co-organizer, NBAA: *“The new aircraft models, the new business models, the featured speakers and the trends we discussed all point to an energetic industry looking toward tomorrow.”*

EBACE 2018 was however initially tinged with sadness at the outset when it was announced that a well-respected industry figure, Serge Dassault, had sadly passed away at the age of 93. It was a notable mark of respect for this great industrialist that the organisers chose to dedicate the event to his memory.

EBACE 2018 started with the unveiling of an industry-wide initiative to further the development and adoption of Sustainable Alternative Jet Fuels. With international climate and emissions requirements in mind, the Isle of Man Aircraft Registry team are working hard to support clients understand and meet [CORSA requirements](#).

Thereafter, the key themes that emerged were: Brexit; European airport and airspace access; business aviation’s role in times of crisis; and the promotion of career opportunities. Yves ‘Jetman’ Rossy was the keynote speaker and understandably attracted a great deal of interest.

A key 'market intelligence theme' that I am now noting with more frequency, is that the US business aviation market is performing increasingly well. Demand appears not to be as strong currently in Europe but there does seem to be increasing confidence that the US-led resurgence will have a positive 'knock-on' effect in Europe and beyond.

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This all has to be tinged with a sense of realism given talk of 'trade wars' between major nations which is inevitably exacerbated by continued global political and financial uncertainty. But it looks like there are clear signs of sustained increases in business aviation activity and associated improvements in positive market sentiment. Clearly this is a welcome development.

Some EBACE attendees and *WCR* readers may be surprised that IOMAR does not have an exhibition booth at this or other events. Such a high-profile arrangement might be expected of the 6th largest private/corporate business aviation registry in the world. However, we have deliberately settled on a more humble modus operandi that serves our clients (and the Registry) well and has proven to be very successful.

Instead, we establish a meeting programme directly with new/existing clients and then meet with them at the location of their choice. We put the client first and go to them, rather than expecting the reverse. We prefer to focus on delivering matters of real substance based on our ethos of Safety with Service. Or put another way: 'facilitating high regulatory standards whilst delivering excellent customer service'

I spent the entire EBACE event in back-to-back meetings, followed by evening networking events. I noticed a real sense of focus, genuine enthusiasm and optimism in those that I met. It was an altogether very positive and heartening experience.

In particular, I was delighted to note the consistent, strongly positive feedback for the hard-working team at the Isle of Man Aircraft Registry. I am not one given over to hyperbole or exaggeration, so am genuinely delighted to have received such a strongly supportive response from our clients, many of whom have been with us since we commenced operations in 2007.

Europe is very important to the Isle of Man Aircraft Registry and we have grown to become the second largest European private/corporate business aviation registry. From my perspective as a Registrar and Aviation Safety Regulator I anticipate that Brexit will have little or no effect but we stand ready to assist in the face of unforeseen challenges. We have members of our team whose main focus is on working with and supporting our European based clients; we will do our utmost to help manage any challenges they face to a successful outcome, so that they can just get on with operating their aircraft safely and efficiently.

One of our main priorities this year is to complete the 'repatriation of the aviation legislative process from the UK' to the Isle of Man. Later this year I anticipate that the powers will be in place for us to be able to: draft; consult on; and then put into operation secondary legislation in a nimble and responsive fashion.

This will allow us to be at the forefront of aviation regulation whilst maintaining high standards of ICAO compliance and importing best practice from the UK, Europe and beyond. The new Isle of Man Air Navigation Order will be laid out to mirror the ICAO Annexes with a strong focus on clarity and accessibility. All of our work is based on my central vision that the Isle of Man becomes a centre of aviation excellence.

The Isle of Man Aircraft Registry is an international, off-shore, highly ICAO compliant aircraft register with as many clients outside Europe as there are within. Thus we balance the wider international efforts with those focussed on Europe. In so doing, we strive to meet the varying demands of a wide range of operational scenarios and this aspect of our work makes the job very interesting, enjoyable and satisfying.

It is very pleasing to receive positive feedback from our clients but we will never become complacent because there are always improvements that can be made. The icing on the cake is to have received two awards from *WCR* this year; one of which was for the second year running!

In summary, EBACE 2018 was unquestionably a success. Business aviation is a great industry populated by clever, dedicated and passionate individuals; the technology and continual advances in this area are extraordinary. I believe that we can look to the future with well-founded optimism. I very much look forward to attending EBACE 2019 and beyond.

Next up is the Isle of Man Aviation Conference which takes place here on the Island on 13th June 2018. The Conference was over-subscribed last year and we are experiencing similarly strong interest this time round. It is a great opportunity for new and existing clients to meet us, discuss contemporary aviation issues and to continue to build on our increasingly successful strategic partnerships. I can't wait! ■

Simon Williams is Isle of Man Director of Civil Aviation

To find out more about the Isle of Man Aircraft Registry please visit our [website](#). If you missed Isle of Man Director of Civil Aviation, Simon Williams at EBACE 2018 and would like to follow up with him then please either call: +44 (0)1624 682358 or email: simon.williams@gov.im