

# 134 years ago: A cathedral was founded on the place of the Emperor's murder in St. Petersburg

## *Alexander II was killed by a terrorist bomb*

Alexander II was known as the "[Tsar liberator](#)," having banished serfdom from Russia. Although Alexander was the only emperor in Russia's history to outlive 5 attempted murders, the 6th one ended in his death.

A member of the revolutionary organization Narodnaya Volya (The People's Will) threw a bomb under the Tsar's feet on March 1, 1881. Alexander passed away hours later, having planned to sign a new constitutional reform that very day.



## **Jacques Schoonjans, Publisher & Editor in Chief with in the background the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood**

Two years later, on Oct. 18 1883, Alexander II's son and the successor as Russian Emperor, Alexander III (father of Nicholas II), ordered the cathedral ([Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood](#)) to be erected around the first stone laid at the place where the terrorist attack happened – on the Yekaterininsky channel (now Griboyedov channel), not far from

the Nevsky Prospect.

[Russia Beyond – Stepan Ivanov](#)

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## **La République de Chine à Taiwan honore Freesun News**

**From right to left : Mr. David Lin Yung-lo, Representative of “Taipei Representative Office in the European Union and Belgium”, Mr Jacques Schoonjans, Publisher & Editor in Chief Freesun News and his wife Mrs Marie Libert.**

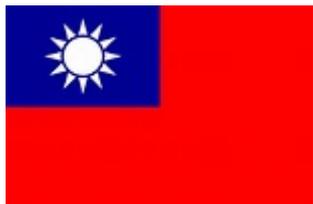
Le Bureau du Tourisme de la République de Chine (Taiwan) a tenu à honorer notre magazine en remettant son “Certificate of Award” à Jacques Schoonjans Editeur et Rédacteur en Chef de Freesun News “In recognition of his invaluable contributions in the field of tourism”.

Cette prestigieuse récompense a été remise à l’occasion de la célébration de la Fête Nationale du Double X par Mr. David Lin Yung-lo, Representative of “Taipei Representative Office in the European Union and Belgium. Mr. David Lin Yung-lo occupa par la suite la fonction de Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de la République de Chine un poste qu’il assumait jusqu’aux élections qui portèrent Madame Tsai Ing-wen à la Présidence du pays.

On retiendra de M. David Lin sa simplicité, sa gentillesse et son intelligence dans l’exercice de ses différentes fonctions. Monsieur Lin devait s’attirer la sympathie des nombreuses personnes côtoyées au cours de son séjour en Belgique.

Le grand honneur fait à Freesun News date déjà d’il y a 7 ans

mais il était bon de le rappeler.



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## LOT summed up a year of direct flights on Warsaw-Seoul Route : fastest growing long-haul connection



*Warsaw, 19 October 2017 – Precisely one year after the launch of the connection, LOT summed up the first 12 months of its presence in South Korea. Until mid-October 2017, in total 67 thousand passengers benefitted from the direct*

*flights and the aircraft load factor was on average 83%. Such excellent performance proves the potential for the connection's expansion and the rise of the tourist and business traffic between Poland, the CEE region and South Korea.*

*"We were convinced right from the beginning that the launch of*

*the connection to Seoul was going to be the bull's eye. It proved us right and it even turned out that the connection has been growing at a faster rate than expected. **The success of the flights on the Warsaw-Seoul route was much greater than we had anticipated,***" says Adrian Kubicki, Director of Corporate Communicatios. "As a new player on the Korean market we opened the winter season last year with three flights per week. Just six months later **the number of our flights went up to five per week and we have been working on launching daily flights to Seoul soon,**" adds Adrian Kubicki.

Opening direct flights always releases the potential in the tourism sector. Thanks to LOT's flights to Seoul, in the past year many Poles decided to visit South Korea even though they had not intended to do that preliminary. **Between January and May 2017 the number of passengers travelling only from Poland to Korea rose by 42%** vis-a-vis a corresponding period last year. Same as Korean passengers who decided to fly by LOT and take an opportunity to visit and discover beautiful Polish regions and cities such as Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, Gdańsk and Poznań.

To passengers flying in from South Korea LOT offers convenient transfers via its Warsaw hub located in the central part of Europe as well as connecting flights to other European destinations. **The advantages of travelling via Warsaw to Europe include less than 60 minutes connecting time,** comfortable check-in desks and lounges as well as a broad range of flights to numerous destinations all over the world.

During the year of direct flights operated on the Warsaw-Seoul route the share of point-to-point traffic on that route was high and stable. Also the share of transfer passengers taking advantage of quick transfers via LOT hub at Warsaw Chopin Airport was important as regards overall traffic figures. In total until mid-October **the average load factor for LOT's aircraft operated on the Warsaw- Seoul route reached 83% per annum.**

*“As regards the structure of the passenger traffic on the Warsaw-Seoul route we have also observed **a significant rise of the share of passengers travelling on business trips** who found LOT Business Class and Premium Economy Class dedicated flights attractive. Economic data show that for the first time in years, 2017 marked a revival in trade relations between Poland and Korea which clearly demonstrates that the further growth of the direct connection is one of key factors fostering the development of economic and tourist relations between the two countries,”* says Adrian Kubicki.

LOT Cargo’s performance in the past year was also reflected by these data. *“We have been working together with the largest Korean technological concerns as regards exports and imports of goods between Korea, Poland and the CEE region, including **Samsung and LG, Samsung, Philips, General Motors, 3M, Hyundai.** Thanks to the direct flight we have become the largest exporter of certain products to South Korea, for example, **we have been shipping 20-30 tons of chokeberry to Korea on board of Dreamliners on a weekly basis,**”* recaps Adrian Kubicki.

The flights on the Warsaw-Seoul route are operated using the most modern aircraft in the world, Boeing 787 Dreamliners. There are three travel classes for passengers to choose from: business, premium economy and economy. Especially for passengers travelling on that route LOT introduced, among others, **a dedicated menu and beverages** while the on-board entertainment system with a broad selection of movies is available in the Korean language version. Furthermore, **there will always be a Korean-speaking crew member on board** the Warsaw-Seoul flights.

Several mid-haul flights in LOT’s network will be operated by state-of-the-art narrow-body aircrafts available on the market, **Boeing 737 MAX 8s, to be soon delivered to LOT.** In the first quarter of 2018 the Polish carrier will be also provided with new, larger **Boeings 787-9** to be operated on long-haul flights, with the capacity of 294 seats.

The launch and expansion of the connection on the Warsaw-Seoul route is one of the elements of LOT's profitable growth strategy that the Polish carrier have been implementing since the beginning of 2016. During that time **LOT has launched the highest number of connections among all airlines in Europe**, including flights from Warsaw to, i.e., Los Angeles, Newark, Seoul, Tokyo and from Kraków to Chicago. In May 2018 LOT plans to launch direct flights from locations outside of Poland, that is, from Budapest to New York City and Chicago.

Tickets to Seoul are available through all sales channels including [lot.com](http://lot.com) website, at LOT Contact Centre, LOT Travel offices, and through the agents.

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## **airBaltic Carries 500 000 Passengers on Bombardier CS300**



**Riga.** The Latvian airline *airBaltic* has carried over 500 000 passengers on the brand new *CS300* aircraft and now every fourth passenger of *airBaltic* is flying *CS300*. In total *airBaltic* has flown to 40 destinations in the Baltics, Europe, Scandinavia, CIS and the Middle East with the *Bombardier CS300* aircraft.

Martin Sedlacký, Chief Operations Officer of *airBaltic*: “CS300 is the most advanced jet aircraft in its class and is showing good operational results. Like all new aircraft, the implementation requires additional attention in terms of linking parts and systems of different manufacturers but our team together with *Bombardier* and other partners are doing excellent work so that our passengers could have the best flying experience.”

*airBaltic* currently has seven CS300 aircraft operated on many popular routes. Thus far, *airBaltic* has completed more than 12 167 scheduled flights and flown over 4 560 block hours with the *Bombardier CS300* aircraft.

By the end of 2019 *airBaltic* plans to have 20 *Bombardier CS300* aircraft in its fleet. By 2021, as an all-*Bombardier* operator, *airBaltic* will have one of the youngest jet fleets in Europe. With the next order, already being negotiated, eventually, *airBaltic* will increase the number of *Bombardier C Series* aircraft on its fleet to at least 34.

The new *Bombardier CS300* aircraft, with a total of 145 seats, offers excellent flying experience with such benefits for passengers as wider seats, larger windows, more hand luggage space in the cabin, improved lavatories and more. New aircraft is also much quieter – with four times smaller noise footprint. Moreover, at the moment, it is the greenest commercial aircraft in the world, as it is the first aircraft to have a transparent declaration of the life-cycle environmental impact, helping to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions by 20% and 50% respectively.

*airBaltic* operates direct flights from Riga to over 60 destinations. *airBaltic* offers convenient connections via Riga to its network spanning Europe, Scandinavia, the CIS and the Middle East. In addition, *airBaltic* also offers direct flights from Tallinn and Vilnius.

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# Pas de salafisme radical à la Grande Mosquée



*Le ministre Jan Jambon, compétent pour la Régie des Bâtiments, a annoncé la résiliation de la concession de la Grande Mosquée de Bruxelles, suivant ainsi une recommandation de la commission parlementaire chargée d'enquêter sur les attentats terroristes de l'année dernière. « Un nouvel avenir va peut-être devoir être trouvé pour la Grande Mosquée », explique Jambon.*

La mosquée est financée par des salafistes saoudiens. D'après la commission parlementaire, elle pourrait ainsi contribuer à propager le radicalisme violent. La commission propose de lutter contre l'ingérence et le financement étrangers. Une solution serait qu'une organisation reconnue – représentant plusieurs courants de l'islam – gère la mosquée.



## **Plus de droit de séjour pour l'imam**

Le secrétaire d'État Theo Francken avait déjà retiré le droit de séjour de l'imam de la Grande Mosquée. Il avait reçu des signaux clairs indiquant que l'homme (également un salafiste) serait radicalisé. « L'imam représente un danger pour la société et la sécurité nationale », affirme Francken. « La lutte contre le salafisme reste une priorité pour le gouvernement. »

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# Save the date of the European Conference on Natural Spas



*The flagship spa & wellness event of the year in Central Europe will be held on 16th November 2017 in the natural Thermal Spa Resort of Radenci, which is known for its springs of the natural mineral water, Radenska. The Conference is organised by the Slovenian Spas Association, which is also celebrating its 60th anniversary, and will bring together leading experts in the fields of Balneology, Hydrotherapy, Physical Rehabilitation, Spas and Wellness for the occasion. You can expect very vivid discussions on all current topics.*

Save the date of the conference on key wellness, health and medical wellness trends and join us for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Slovenian Spa Association. The [European Conference on Natural Spas](#) takes place on 16th November in Terme Radenci. The Slovenian Spa Association has already received the confirmed participation of the presidents of FEMTEC (the World Federation of Hydrotherapy and Climatotherapy), ESPA (the European Spas Association), ISMH (the International Society of Medical Hydrology and Climatology), Wellness Hotels & Resorts, GWI (the Global

Wellness Institute) and many more international experts. The conference will also be enriched by Slovenian experts and stakeholders in the wellness and spa industry. You can find the Preliminary Programme on the official website of the event [here](#).

The Slovenian Spas Association is also the initiator of the SPA-CE trade show where the most important providers of spa and wellness services from European countries meet, exchange ideas and provide opportunities for new connections in the wider Central European Region. It will take place at Ptuj Thermal Spa from 17th to 19th November.

Slovenia's natural spas, which are the backbone of the country's tourism facilities, are developing medical, wellness and selfness programmes. Some of these health resort and spa centres are among the best in Europe, and are famed for their outstanding programmes of preventive care, treatment, rehabilitation or relaxation. The therapies and treatments in Slovenia's natural spas bring together a century of tradition and cutting-edge medical approaches.

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**airberlin to cease operating  
as part of oneworld from 28  
October**

airberlin will cease participating in the **oneworld**® alliance with effect from the close of business on 27 October 2017, following the filing by Air Berlin PLC & Co. Luftverkehrs KG's ("airberlin") for the opening of insolvency proceedings over its assets.



airberlin's affiliate NIKI – which joined **oneworld** alongside airberlin in March 2012 – will no longer fly as part of **oneworld** at the same time.

**oneworld** will continue to serve more than 1,000 airports in almost 160 countries worldwide. The withdrawal of airberlin and NIKI from the alliance will mean a dozen destinations – half of them regional cities in Austria and Germany and the rest southern European holiday spots – leaving the alliance's global network.

**airberlin** **oneworld** will maintain a strong presence in airberlin's Germany and Austria home markets. Ten other **oneworld** member airlines serve a total of 13 destinations across the two countries, linking them with the alliance's global network. Throughout Europe, **oneworld** member airlines will continue to fly to more than 230 destinations in some 40 countries.

A number of **oneworld** member airlines are making a tier-status matching offer to members of airberlin's topbonus frequent flyer programme, enabling them to maintain their Emerald, Sapphire or Ruby status when flying with any **oneworld** member airline. For details, see individual member airline's frequent flyer websites, specifically

- [British Airways](#).
- [Finnair](#).
- [Iberia](#).

- [Royal Jordanian](#).

For further information on the current situation at airberlin, including advice to customers with bookings on flights it has cancelled, see [airberlin.com](http://airberlin.com)



The following arrangements will apply in the withdrawal of airberlin and NIKI from **oneworld**:

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| <p><b>Frequent flyer programme redemption flights</b></p> | <p>airberlin closed its flights for new redemption bookings by members of its and partner airlines' frequent flyer programmes as it filed for insolvency two months ago. airberlin has confirmed that redemption flights already booked by members of other <b>oneworld</b> airlines' frequent flyer programmes for travel on airberlin on or before 27 October 2017 remain valid. If you have a redemption flight on airberlin booked for 28 October 2017 or later, or if the airberlin flight for which you hold a redemption booking is not operating, please contact your frequent flyer programme.</p> <p>airberlin topbonus cardholders have not been able to make redemption bookings for flights on any airlines since it filed for insolvency. Redemption flights made before then remain valid.</p> |
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| <p><b>Earning frequent flyer rewards and tier status points</b></p> | <p>Most <b>oneworld</b> member airlines, other than airberlin, have indicated they will honour frequent flyer reward miles/points and tier status points earned for flights on airberlin by their frequent flyer programme members for a period, up to and including 27 October 2017. Refer to your frequent flyer programme for details. airberlin topbonus cardholders have not been able to earn frequent flyer tier status points or mileage rewards on any airline since its insolvency filing.</p>  |
| <p><b>Lounge access</b></p>   | <p>Emerald and Sapphire tier members of other <b>oneworld</b> airlines' frequent flyer programmes may continue to use airberlin lounges, in line with <b>oneworld's</b> existing arrangements, until the close of business in 27 October 2017. airberlin lounges will not be available as part of the <b>oneworld</b> offering thereafter. airberlin topbonus Platinum and Gold cardholders will be able to use the lounges of other <b>oneworld</b> member airlines until the close of business on 27 October 2017, in line with <b>oneworld's</b> existing arrangements. They will not be able to use these other airlines' lounges as part of the <b>oneworld</b> offering thereafter.</p> |

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| <p><b>Other frequent flyer benefits</b></p>   | <p>Members of all other <b>oneworld</b> airlines' frequent flyer programmes will continue to receive all other <b>oneworld</b> frequent flyer services and benefits (additional baggage allowances, priority check-in, boarding, waitlisting, etc) when they fly on airberlin until the close of business on 27 October 2017.</p> <p>Likewise, members of airberlin topbonus will continue to receive all other <b>oneworld</b> frequent flyer services and benefits when they fly on the other <b>oneworld</b> airlines until the close of business on 27 October 2017, when these services and benefits will no longer apply to them.</p> |
| <p><b>oneworld fares and sales products (including Explorer, Circle, Visit fares, corporate agreements etc)</b></p> | <p>All sectors on airberlin and NIKI booked and ticketed as part of a <b>oneworld</b> fare or sales product for travel before the close of business on 27 October 2017 remain valid. For sectors on airberlin thereafter, or if a ticketed airberlin sector scheduled for before then has been cancelled, please contact the <b>oneworld</b> member airline that issued the ticket. airberlin and NIKI sectors will not be available as part of any <b>oneworld</b> fare or sales product from the close of business on 27 October 2017.</p>  |

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| <b>Sectors on<br/>airberlin ticketed<br/>by another<br/>oneworld member<br/>airline</b> | If you have been ticketed by another <b>oneworld</b> member airline for sectors on airberlin scheduled for departure on 28 October 2017 or thereafter, or for sectors on airberlin that will not operate before then, please contact the airline that issued the ticket. |
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**About [oneworld](#)**

**oneworld** is an alliance of some of the world's leading airlines, committed to providing the highest level of service and convenience to frequent international travellers. They include American Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, Iberia, Japan Airlines, LATAM Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Qantas, Qatar Airways, Royal Jordanian, S7 Airlines and SriLankan Airlines, and around 30 affiliates.

As part of **oneworld**, these airlines:

- Serve more than a thousand airports in 150 plus countries, with 14,000 daily departures.
- Carry some 550 million passengers a year on a combined fleet of 3,500 aircraft.
- Generate US\$ 130 billion annual revenues.

**oneworld** member airlines work together to deliver consistently a superior, seamless travel experience, with special privileges and rewards for frequent flyers, including earning and redeeming miles and points across the entire alliance network. Top tier cardholders (Emerald and Sapphire) enjoy access to more than 650 airport lounges and are offered extra baggage allowances. The most regular travellers (Emerald) can also use fast track security lanes at select airports.

**oneworld** is the "most highly prized alliance" as current holder of:

- FlightStats' Airline Alliance On-Time Performance Service Award for 2016, for the fourth year running.
- Business Traveller's 2017 Best Airline Alliance for the fifth year running.
- Global Traveler magazine's 2016 GT Tested Reader Survey – for the seventh year in a row.
- Trazees' Favorite Airline Alliance, for the second time.
- Business Traveler North America's 2016 Best in Business Travel Awards, for the second consecutive year.
- World Travel Awards' World's Leading Airline Alliance 2016 for the 14th year running.
- Premier Traveler's Best of Travel Awards – for the third year running.