

**14 February 2020**

**Air Partner evacuates over 300 British and EU nationals from Wuhan in wake of coronavirus outbreak**

**Highlights**

- Non-stop flights departed Wuhan on 31 January and 8 February, carrying over 125 and 213 passengers respectively
- Passengers primarily comprised of British and EU nationals, flight crew and medical professionals
- Air Partner arranged last-minute transportation of 407 boxes of medical supplies to Wuhan on first positioning flight and an additional 200 boxes on the second flight
- Air Partner chartered an additional flight on 2 February from France to UK, bringing back British passengers and their dependents who had been aboard a French Government evacuation flight from Wuhan

Air Partner plc (“Air Partner”), the global aviation services group, was recently called upon by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) to arrange two charter flights for the evacuation of British and EU nationals from Wuhan in China to RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire, following the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak in December 2019.

The flights took place on 31 January and 8 February, carrying over 125 and 200 passengers respectively on Boeing 747-400s. These aircraft were chosen on account of their high-density seating configuration and long-distance range, which meant the flights could operate non-stop between the two destinations.

The aircraft were ideally configured for the flights, with the upper deck designated for crew rest only so that there was clear segregation between the evacuees and the flight crew. There was also a separate section in the nose of the aircraft, which could be used as an isolation zone for passengers if necessary.

Given the highly contagious nature of COVID-19, the Air Partner team worked closely with a number of different stakeholders, including the FCO, Public Health England and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), to put in place the necessary safeguards and protocols for the flight crew. UK government medical professionals were also on-board the aircraft to assist the passengers and crew during the flight.

Securing the required overflight and landing permissions was made challenging by the time difference, with the Chinese government operating only within their working hours and the level of diplomatic assistance needed. Air Partner’s 24/7 Operations and the FCO used their extensive experience and networks to obtain all permits in the required time-frame.

In addition, at the last-minute Air Partner arranged for the transportation of 407 boxes of medical supplies on the first positioning flight from Madrid, where the aircraft was based, to Wuhan to support medical efforts there. The team also arranged a separate flight on 2 February aboard an A318 aircraft from Istres in France to Brize Norton, bringing back 11 British passengers and their dependents who had been aboard a previous French evacuation flight from Wuhan.

Over the last four weeks, the number of coronavirus related enquiries Air Partner has received across the business has increased. This includes increased Private Jet enquiries, requests for medical equipment cargo flights and emergency evacuations.

Air Partner has significant aid and crisis experience and in 2014 and 2015, the Group assisted in the humanitarian response to the Ebola crisis by working with governments, NGOs and aid agencies to provide the affected regions with vital supplies. At the peak of the crisis, the Group was operating flights every 48 hours carrying cargo of medical equipment and supplies, vehicles, construction materials and protective clothing.

**Mark Briffa, CEO at Air Partner, commented:** *“The coronavirus outbreak has been an extremely difficult time for everyone involved and we are very pleased to have safely repatriated a large number of British and EU nationals on behalf of the UK government. The circumstances were challenging, the deadlines tight and difficult permissions were required but we were able to execute the evacuation on*

*account of the experience and dedication of our combined Air Partner team, our close working relationship with the FCO, and the professionalism and flexibility of our partner airline operator. From all of us at Air Partner, we wish everyone affected by the virus a speedy recovery.”*

## **Ends**

### **Enquiries:**

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### **About Air Partner:**

Founded in 1961, Air Partner is a global aviation services group providing aircraft charter and aviation safety & security solutions to industry, commerce, governments and private individuals, across civil and defence organisations. The Group has two divisions: Air Partner Charter, comprising Group Charter (formerly Commercial Jets), Private Jets, Freight and Remarketing; and Air Partner Safety & Security (formerly Consulting & Training), which comprises Baines Simmons and Redline Assured Security.

Group Charter charters large airliners to move groups of any size. Private Jets offers the Company's unique pre-paid JetCard scheme and on-demand charter for up to 19 people. Freight charters aircraft of every size to fly almost any cargo anywhere, at any time. Air Partner Remarketing provides comprehensive remarketing programmes for all types of commercial and corporate aircraft to a wide range of international customers.

Baines Simmons offers Aviation Safety Management, Fatigue Risk Management, Air Traffic Services, Wildlife Hazard Management and Aircraft Registry Services. Redline Assured Security delivers government-standard security training and solutions.

Air Partner has 17 offices across three continents, with its headquarters located alongside Gatwick airport in the UK. The group employs around 450 aviation professionals globally and operates 24/7. Air Partner is listed on the London Stock Exchange (AIR) and is the only publicly listed air charter broker and aviation safety & security consultancy. It is ISO 9001:2015 compliant for commercial airline and private jet solutions worldwide.

More information is available on the company's website ([www.airpartner.com](http://www.airpartner.com)).