



# Æ AirEuropa

## Air Europa, the leading company in Belgium to flight to Latin America

Interview with **Marie Manzah**, Sales Manager at Air Europa Belux

**Air Europa** is the airline company of **Globalia**, the first Spanish tourist group based on turnover volume, which was founded and chaired by Juan José Hidalgo. During 2015, the company carried 10.2 million passengers, being the second Spanish company in passenger freight. Globalia is a member of **SkyTeam** since 2007, a global airline alliance currently integrated by **20 airlines**, which offers to their passengers the possibility to access to a wide global network with more than 16,720 direct flights to 1,057 destinies in 179 countries.

We interview Marie Manzah, Sales Manager at Air Europa Belux who leads, from Brussels, the team of the company in both countries.

**The first flight Brussels – Madrid took off from Zaventem on 2 December 2012. Which were the reasons that facilitated the establishment of the company in Belgium?**

Some years ago, the company dediced to open new European routes to feed its hub, which is located in Madrid. The establishment in Brussels, Milan, Rome, London, Paris and Lisbon enabled to feed its hub in Madrid and strengthen their routes to the Caribbean, Latin America and the United States. Brussels, as European capital, was undoubtedly positioned as a must destination for the company.

Moreover, as the European capital, Brussels was an essential destination. After the opening of the Brussels office, Air Europa has followed the same logic and it has opened Frankfurt, Munich and, this year, Zurich. These destinations are important according to their passengers and they allow to keep high occupation levels in l long-haul destinations.





*“From Brussels, we have two direct flights to Madrid. The morning flight allows a very good connection with Havana, Bogota, Miami, New York, Santo Domingo, Punta Cana, Cancun or Salvador de Bahía, traditional holiday destinations. The evening one enables an ideal connection with Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Montevideo or Caracas”.*

**During 2013 Zaventem Airport recognized Air Europa with the “Most on time company” award and the Official Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium and Luxembourg gave you its “Company of the Year Award”, in recognition to your quick commercial position in Belgium. How did you manage to settle in the Belgian market?**

Since our arrival to this market, we tried to develop a strategic approach with the local professionals of the tourist sector and we made important efforts to foster new destinations and the Air Europa product. These actions were carried out in collaboration with the main actors of the tourist sector and always with the support of the Official Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium.

On the other hand, our office is focused on the B2B. We work with all the Belgian travel agencies: they sell our destinations and we provide technical and commercial support to them.

Of course, passengers have also the choice of buying by themselves their flights in the web page, available in several languages.

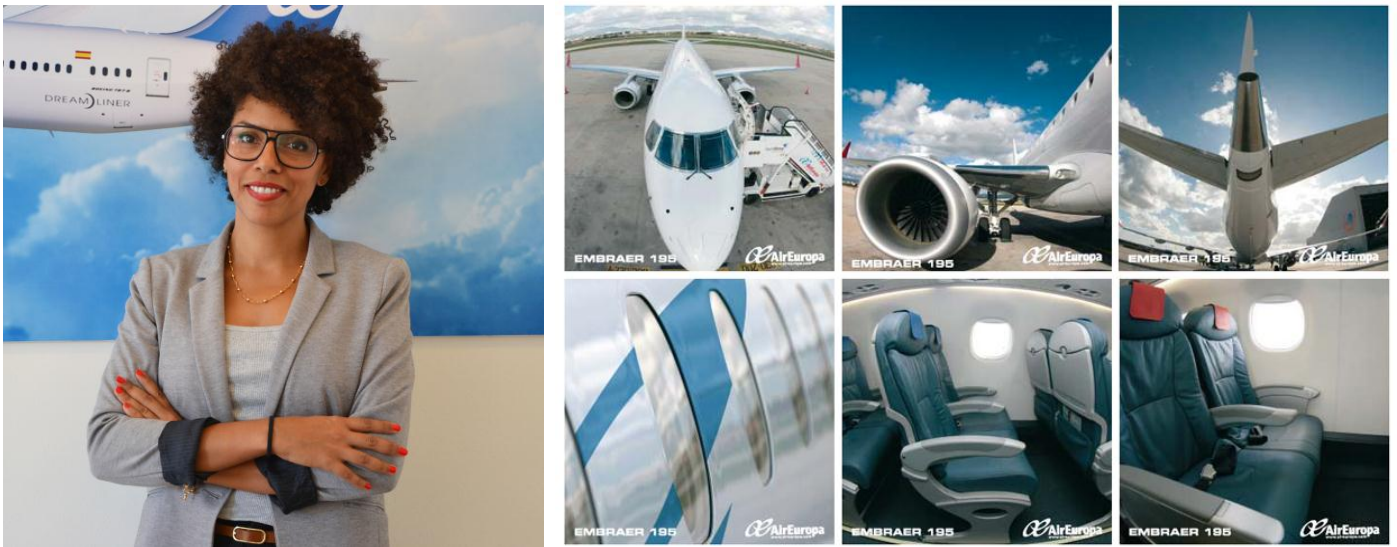
Thanks to all of this, the route Brussels – Madrid was a success from the first year, reaching an average occupancy rate above 75 % in 2013. Nowadays we are accomplishing the main goal: selling Latin America. We have seen increasing very quick percentage of passengers who do long haul flights from Brussels to Havana, Lima, Buenos Aires, and now as well Bogota.

**What kind of difficulties did you face at the beginning?**

We took a great challenge from the beginning, since either few people knew Air Europa in Belgium and Luxembourg, either they had a wrong idea of the company. Because of that, one important part of the work of the Belgian team focuses on enhancing brand's visibility in Belgium and Luxembourg, taking part in events that enable us to improve it.

Marie Manzah is the Sales Manager of the Air Europe office in Brussels since its opening in 2012. She studied Applied Foreign Languages, Spanish and Italian, in the Paris-Sorbonne University and then she focused her career on the airline sector, in which she has a longstanding experience. During a year she worked as a ramp agent for the Paris Airport and afterwards she became a flights supervisor. Moreover, prior to her current position as a Sales Manager in Brussels, between 2004 and 2012, Marie Manzah was a B2B commercial agent for Air Europa in the French capital.





Boosting brand's visibility is not so easy in a such competitive market, but we are lucky to count on really motivated workers who always seek for new opportunities with the limited resources that offers a familiar company as ours in comparison to other largest airlines.

### **Which connections does Air Europa currently offer from Belgium and Luxembourg?**

From Brussels, we have two direct flights to Madrid. The morning flight leaves at 11h05 and it allows a very good connection with Havana, Bogota, Miami, New York, Santo Domingo, Punta Cana, Cancun or Salvador de Bahía, traditional holiday destinations. The evening flight is at 18h40, and it enables an ideal connection with Buenos Aires, Sao Paolo, Montevideo or Caracas.

From Luxembourg, the company does not operate any flight itself, but we have agreements with LuxAir that allow to flight from there.

Making our customers visualize our company as the reference for the flights from BeLux to Latin America is our goal.

In June 2016, we launched Bogota as a long-distance destination, and in December we will start operating flights to Guayaquil (Ecuador) and Cordoba (Argentina).

### **What are the most pressing challenges for Air Europa Belux?**

I think that all our offices face the same challenge: to satisfy any kind of traveler. Our product is aimed to both leisure travelers and business ones. We have prices tailored for both of them.

Our goal is focuses on improving ourselves to provide the best service and the best price. For instance, one of the latest innovations we have made is to fix a special fare for those customers who travel free of luggage, as well as Wi-Fi connection and streaming services on board. On the other hand, we offer a healthy catering service with fresh products. In business class, menus are natural and elaborated by a Michelin Star chef,

Among other innovations, we could outline that our new planes Dreamlines 787 offer flat-bed service, the business cabins of ours A330-200 have been renovated and we have improved the cushions' quality to guarantee the comfort of all our passengers.

Our 48 planes are all from last generation and Air Europa is the Spanish company which has the highest number of safety certificates.

In short, if we are sure about something, is about the fact that every detail counts.



## How does Air Europe manage to keep customers' loyalty?

The fact that this Company belongs to the Skyteam Alliance is something that travelers appreciate very positively. In addition, from 2016, passengers can register to the new loyalty program SUMA (<https://www.aireuropa.com/en/suma/suma>), the new Air Europa's program of Frequent Travelers. SUMA is designed for our customers in order to offer them a valuable service, closer and customized. Our strategy to keep customer loyalty is to offer some benefits – discounts and services – so as they flight and continue flying with us. Our customers can earn and/or redeem SUMA miles or Flying Blue card in each one of their purchases.

## Air Europa is a sponsor member of the Chamber, which benefits has your membership brought to the company?

First of all, great support all the way. The meeting with the Chamber was one the first I had one month before opening the office in Brussels. A series of trips were organized with the office in Paris (Alcino Ribeiro and Vincent Verdonck) to find a location, one of our priorities. We were lucky to know that the Official Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium and Luxembourg rented offices in the center of Brussels: we saved a lot of time for Air Europa and it was easy our establishment. In addition, we have taken advantage of all the services that the Chamber offers, as their meeting rooms for making interviews, etc. The team of the Chamber disseminated the news of our arrival through their newsletter and their web page. The welcome was perfect, and the support given by the Chamber was very helpful. Due to the growth of Air Europa, we currently own an independent office in the European neighborhood of Brussels.



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