

MAS Frankfurt Director Denies Rumours Of Service Discontinuation To Frankfurt
Bernama
10 March, 2014

BERLIN, March 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysia Airlines' (MAS) Frankfurt office has denied rumours that the carrier is discontinuing its five-weekly flight service to Frankfurt following its recent announcement to stop flights to Los Angeles, saying they are "unfounded and untrue".

"Our managing director Ahmad Jauhari Yahya clearly stated recently that there would be no further international route cutting this year after Los Angeles.

"Frankfurt is not on the radar (of any route cutting). It is untrue and inaccurate on the part of certain elements to suggest that MAS is discontinuing the Frankfurt route," David Raj, the carrier's Frankfurt director, told Bernama at the International Tourism Bourse (ITB) in Berlin, which had a high-profiled participation by Malaysian tour operators, hoteliers and others connected with the industry.

Asked about the discontinuation to other destinations, particularly to North America, Raj pointed out that MAS' membership in the OneWorld alliance since Feb 1, 2012 has resulted in about 84 per cent growth in the airline's passenger traffic.

"We have launched flights to new destinations such as Darwin (Australia), Krabi (Thailand) and Cochin (India). These are signs of expansion.

"Because of our OneWorld membership, we have entered into code-sharing arrangements with American Airlines which enable us to reach 136 destinations alone in the United States," he said.

MAS' other OneWorld partners include Air Berlin, British Airways and FinnAir.

"Despite our physical absence from certain markets, our OneWorld partnership is helping us," Raj said.

Raj said MAS' older generation of planes are being gradually replaced with new versions. The present fleet of 148 aircraft is a mix of Boeing and Airbus models.

The carrier has already received six Airbus A380 aircraft, and in 2013 alone took delivery of 21 new aircraft (a mix of Boeing and Airbus).

The average age of the carrier's aircraft at the end of last year was 6.6 years. "We want to bring this to 5.5 years by end-2014," Raj said.

MAS is planning to replace all its B-777 aircraft and phase them out between 2015 and 2018.

"This fleet modernisation is aimed at sustaining and expanding our international routes," he said.

Meanwhile, a sense of sorrow descended on some Malaysians at the Berlin show as news spread about the disappearance of a MAS B777 aircraft on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

There was also a mood of depression amongst some Chinese participants.

China's national pavilion at the show was in an adjacent hall to Malaysia's pavilion.

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