

## Airbus begins cargo airline

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Using its Beluga ST fleet to offer freight companies and other potential customers a solution to their outsized freight transportation needs Airbus has launched a new air-cargo service.

The new service - Airbus Beluga Transport - will provide commercially-contracted customers in a variety of sectors, including space, energy, military, aeronautic, maritime and humanitarian sectors, with a solution to their large cargo transport needs.

The first mission took place at the end of 2021 with a delivery from Airbus Helicopters' manufacturing site in Marignane, France, to Kobe in Japan for an undisclosed customer.

A Beluga stopped to refuel at Warsaw (Poland), Novosibirsk (Russia) and Seoul (Korea).

Phillippe Sabo, head of air oversize transport at Airbus, said: "The Beluga's wider cross-section will open up new markets and new logistical possibilities for customers.

"In the case of loading helicopters - not having to dismantle them first - really is a plus.

"Similarly, the largest commercial aircraft engines can be accommodated in a fully-dressed configuration."

Based on the A300-600 design, the five-strong BelugaST fleet, which has until now

been the backbone of Airbus' inter-site transportation of large aircraft sections, are being replaced by six new-generation BelugaXLs to support Airbus' ramp-up of its airliner production.

The new Airbus Beluga Transport service can cater for a multitude of market applications since the planes possess the largest interior cross-section of any transport aircraft.

In the near future, once Airbus has commissioned all six new BelugaXLs, the fully-released BelugaST fleet will be handed over to a newly-created, subsidiary airline with its own Air Operator Certificate and staff.

Sabo added: "The new airline will be flexible and agile to address the needs of external worldwide markets."

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