

# GLOBALLY yours

As it aggressively expands its fleet, Turkish Airlines is poised to become a major global carrier *By Wilson Chow*



**T**urkey is a country where east meets west—literally. Divided by the Bosphorus waterway, the country is in both Europe and Asia, and is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. Its largest city, Istanbul, the world's fourth-largest city, with a population of 12.8 million, has been a crucial location for international trade for thousands of years since its formation as Byzantium around 600 B.C.

That economic growth in Turkey is helping fuel the rapid expansion of its national flag carrier, Turkish Airlines, which recently celebrated its 77th birthday. Despite the global recession, which caused many airlines to reduce capacity, Turkish Airlines has continued to grow. In 2010, the airline aims to carry more than 30 million passengers—nearly triple the 10.4 million passengers it carried in 2003—and to generate revenues of \$5.7 billion.

"We have already grown to rapidly become the fourth-largest airline in Europe and our sights are firmly set on securing the No. 3 slot," said Temel Kotil, chief executive officer of Turkish Airlines. "We aim to create Europe's first five-star airline and offer a level of service and global network that are truly world-class."

Taking advantage of its Istanbul hub's central location, Turkish Airlines is building a major transit point for passengers as they travel between North America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The airline is opening new transatlantic and Asian routes, which will increase traffic through Istanbul by 40 percent.

"Turkish Airlines has long been an important Boeing customer. The strength

of the Turkish market and [the airline's] strategy will continue to enhance their position in the industry," said Aldo Basile, Boeing Commercial Airplanes vice president of Sales for Europe and Russia.

Turkish Airlines operates a mixed fleet of 142 airplanes. To accommodate growth and help build additional demand, it has ordered 12 777-300ER (Extended Range) and 69 Next-Generation 737 airplanes, the latest of which will have the new Boeing Sky Interior.

As the airline expands across the globe—Turkish now serves 161 destinations—it's aiming to take service to a new level. "Quality doesn't need a passport," Kotil said.

The effort is working. Recently, Skytrax (an airline research organization) recognized Turkish Airlines with two prestigious awards: Best Airline in Southern Europe and Best Onboard Catering—Economy Class.

"As Turkish Airlines continues to grow, we want to be there to support its business and future success with the most innovative, high-tech, capable jetliners in the world," Basile said. ■

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*— Temel Kotil, chief executive officer of Turkish Airlines*

PHOTO: TURKISH AIRLINES



**PHOTO: (Above)** The Boeing Next-Generation 737-800 model in the Turkish Airlines livery. **TURKISH AIRLINES**