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A flying start

TIMES ARE HARD FOR THE PRIVATE AVIATION SECTOR BUT ECCELSA AVIATION'S SERVICE AND PERFORMANCE DRIVE IS HELPING TO BUCK THE TREND. LYNDON DRIVER TALKED TO FRANCESCO COSSU, MANAGER OF OPERATIONS AND SECURITY

Eccelsa Aviation is an award-winning provider of private aviation services. The company is located on the north east coast of Sardinia, in close proximity to the world famous Sardinian beaches, marinas, golf courses and convention centres and close to the Costa Smeralda, playground of the rich and famous. In 1989 the Private Aviation handling support at Olbia Costa Smeralda Airport was implemented, while Eccelsa Aviation (Eccelsa, the Italian for 'excellence') was established in 2003 with a new customer orientation attitude. And with the new name came a new approach, a new way of working, in search of excellence.

Francesco Cossu is Manager of Operations and Security at Eccelsa Aviation; 'In 2003 we undertook a large-scale refurbishment of the business, not only creating the name Eccelsa but also investing in equipment, staff, operations and facilities.' Indeed the terminal at Olbia has a secure VIP lounge (ideal for conducting private business meetings), conference room, a lounge for the crew and even a snooze room.

'We also invested heavily in personnel and training, to ensure maximum satisfaction for all our customers. Our people are skilled in a variety of languages, and with an increase in the number of client from the gulf and Russia, we have ensured that we have Arabic and Russian linguists in our team. Furthermore, our extensive training programme ensures that today our team is capable of handling for a vast range of aircraft from the smallest single piston engine aeroplane to a Boeing 747,' says Cossu.

Due to an increasing passenger numbers - the terminal currently handles around 40,000 passenger each year - Eccelsa is about to unveil a new terminal within the airport perimeter, but detached from the rest of the airport buildings, containing new facilities including a range of prestige shops, a fine-dining



The new Eccelsa Terminal



restaurant, full conferencing facilities and even a health spa.

The opening of the new terminal building has been timed to coincide with the staging of the 2009 G8, held this year in La Maddalena, Sardinia. It is expected some 13,000 people will attend this global conference, with the majority passing through the Eccelsa terminals.

Although Eccelsa's business seems to be going from strength to strength, Cossu is philosophical



Patio outside the new terminal

about the prospects for the company in what is an extremely tough economic climate. 'We have to be very concerned about the future prospects for airline travel and the aviation industry in general, as without passengers business would stall. We are also taking steps to safeguard our position; having made a large-scale investment in a new terminal, we have frozen prices across the board on all our service offerings and are committed to keeping the same fees while

maintaining a high level of service.'

'It is measures such as this that are going to become vital in a market that is tough for everyone, both passengers and operators alike. It is also imperative that we remain true to our mantra of constantly looking for ways of improving our performance and serving our clients better. We need to remember why we are called Eccelsa, and always strive for excellence in all we do.' ●