**PRESS RELEASE
Ostend-Bruges International Airport 2.0**

**Wednesday, January 4th 2017 –** During a press conference at the airport of Ostend-Bruges, the annual results and investments plans for 2017 were announced. To address the growing number of destinations and in order to meet the extra capacity from TUI, the airport of Ostend-Bruges and partner Erasmus Catering Services are going to invest in the airside departure hall. At the same time, they will roll out an innovative Food and Beverage concept.

**Results 2016 Airport Ostend-Bruges**

The amount of passengers that used the airport of Ostend-Bruges in 2015 has increased by 57,6% compared to 2015. Each month of 2016 had more passengers compared to the same months in 2015, reaching a peak for the months of March and April with 100.000 additional passengers. Several airlines, including TUI, operated in that period quite a few flights departing from Ostend as an alternative to Brussels Airport. Freight traffic has increased by 32% compared to 2015. In the meantime, the number of movements has decreased by 8,4%.

**20 years TUI at the Airport of Ostend-Bruges: 20 destinations**

In 2016, TUI celebrated its 20th anniversary at the Airport of Ostend-Bruges. Alicante, a destination introduced in 1996 departing from Ostend, still proves to be a huge success in 2016. Alicante turns out to be the most popular destination departing from Ostend (accounting for 30.580 passengers in 2016). At the beginning of April, TUI will launch its 20th destination from Ostend with 2 flights a week to Eskisehir in Turkey. *“The growing popularity of Ostend-Bruges reaches far beyond the borders of West Flanders. Also in the region of East Flanders, Hainaut and even Nord-Pas-de-Calais in France, travellers are already discovering the strenghts of our small, easily accessible airport.“*, says Dirk Van Holsbeke, General Manager of TUI Belgium.

**Future plans**

The impact of the attacks of 22 March 2016 at regional airports and the increasing demand of passengers to depart from regional airports will lead to major investments in 2017. The exterior of the terminal will be much needed renovated and € 1.000.050 will be invested in a new airside departure hall. The security zone will be extended, a VIP lounge will be created and passengers on airside will be able to enjoy several catering and shopping facilities. The airport will join forces with Erasmus Catering Services, based in Rotterdam. A company with almost 80 years of experience in the catering world, both airline catering services as well as pubs and restaurants.

Marcel Buelens, CEO of Ostend-Bruges Airport says: *“We are extremely pleased to collaborate with Erasmus Catering Services. They have a lot of experience with airports and airlines, and I am convinced that we will able to raise this airport to the next level, 2.0.”* Furthermore, the airport will implement the necessary tools to extend freight traffic and General Aviation activities.

Mayor Johan Vande Lanotte says: *“The Municipality of Ostend follows the developments of Ostend Airport very closely. Every 3 weeks, there is a meeting between me, the Airport management and the Economic House. We see that there is progression on several areas, which is very important to us because this creates additional direct and indirect employment.”*

**Cherry on the cake**

During the past year, many inhabitants of Ostend were wondering what would happen to the former restaurant Charles Lindberg at *Nieuwpoortsesteenweg*. Erasmus Catering Services will also invest in this building. After a thorough renovation of the current building, a catering production unit will be constructed, that will be in charge of the supply for aircraft and the Food and Beverage section of the airside departure hall.

**Figures**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2015 | 2016 | Difference  |
| Passengers | 276.027 | 434.970 | +57,6% |
| Movements | 26.412 | 24.183 | -8,4% |
| Freight (ton) | 16.842 | 22.224 | +32% |

**Record years**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1964** | **1965** | **1966** | **2016** | **1967** |
| 485.534 | 466.427 | 451.044 | 434.970 | 427.682 |

 **Top month 2016** April (96.448 passengers)
**Top destination 2016** Alicante (TUI)
**Number of employed people in 2016**  115

**About Airport Ostend-Bruges**

*Ostend-Bruges International Airport is part of the French corporation Egis and consists of a new structure LOM-LEM. This new structure has created a partnership between the government which will take up a number of responsibilities concerning the basic infrastructure of the airport (the ‘airport development company’ or LOM) and the private corporation Egis which will mainly be responsible for the exploitation of the airport (the ‘airport exploitation company’ or LEM). An important proportion of the activities of the airport focuses on freight transport. Our airport also warmly welcomes its passengers, with TUI as most important airline company. The Airport of Ostend-Bruges also gives you the opportunity to fly private jets or organise business flights, training flights or ad hoc flights for special events. In 2016, we registered 434.970 passengers, an increase of 57,6% compared to 2015.*

**About TUI *-*** *TUI: Belgium's leading holiday brand, with 2.3 million travellers in 2016
- TUI fly: Belgium’s second largest airline company with 3.7 million passengers in 2015
- TUI: 95 travel agencies
- TUI Belgium: 2200 employed people in Belgium
- TUI Belgium: part of TUI Group, the world's largest tourism travel group*

**About Erasmus Catering Services**

*Erasmus Catering Services was set up in 1940 and launched her catering activitities at Rotterdam the Hague Airport in 1956. The catering activitities has been expanded very fast with airline catering. That’s why they have build a hyper modern catering production unit at the Rotterdam the Hague Airport. In 2014, Brasserie Waalhaven opened its doors on a unique location with a splendid view on the runway of Rotterdam Airport. In 2017, Erasmus Catering Services launches several catering concepts at the Airport of Ostend-Bruges.*

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