



How can Czech business aviation grow into a thriving and sustainable sector? This question dominated a recent meeting of the country's business aviation operators and suppliers.

For a country with 10.5 million inhabitants, business aviation in the Czech Republic is promising. The country has a bizav fleet of 101 based aircraft and sees 19,373 business aviation movements a year. In total the sector contributes 11,100 jobs and €1.32 billion in output to the Czech economy.

However, according to meeting participants more can be done to convince the Czech CAA of the industry's value. One participant said that the Czech CAA is under-resourced, restricting its ability to respond promptly to the concerns of operators.

Another said that the CAA lacks a clear understanding of business aviation. He added that most CAA employees had airline backgrounds, which meant that rules were applied in such a way that didn't take account of the sector's specificity.

Participants also said more Czech airports should open up to business aviation through the use of EGNOS technology; adding that although the technology exists, airports are unwilling to use it and authorities are unlikely to approve it. It remains a fact for instance, that there are no options for IFR clearance at any non-instrument runway airport in the country.

As in Denmark, the business case for EGNOS based-approaches in the Czech Republic is strong, and for regional airports such as Bubovice Airfield, Havlíčkův Brod Airport and Hradec Králové Airport, it can be very compelling.

In a follow up meeting with the Czech CAA, Secretary General David Jagr acknowledged that the country was behind the curve on LPV. He said that LPV was now a priority at the CAA, but added that Czech airspace was complicated, and many other Czech stakeholders, including those responsible for military airspace, were sceptical about the technology's potential.

As it is understandable that CAAs will be orientated towards the needs of commercial aviation; participants agreed that they should work constructively with the Czech Authorities, to transmit a clear message about business aviation's value.

After all, today's business aircraft users include mid-tier management and mid-market firms, often chartering rather than owning the aircraft they use. With the introduction of lower-cost aircraft including turboprops, more people are able to capitalise on the many benefits of private business travel.



The vast majority of business jets are owned by governments and companies that make their aircraft available for transporting government officials, business leaders, and sales and marketing teams, or to shuttle engineers and project managers off-site.

In the Czech Republic, and indeed, throughout the whole of Europe, business aviation is an essential part of the air transport ecosystem. The number of passengers it transports in Europe each year (slightly more than 3 Million) may represent a fraction of the total number of passengers flying with scheduled airlines (network and low-cost carriers); but with a

fleet of 3,800 aeroplanes (both twin-engine turboprop and jets) and helicopters, its positive impact on European business is evident.

So, if a more constructive relationship were to develop between operators and the CAA, and if more airports opened up to business aviation through EGNOS technology, the knock-on effects for the Czech economy could be significant.

This report is based on a meeting of 33 industry representatives including representatives from Czech business aviation operators, and suppliers.

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**Location:** Holiday Inn, K Letišti Prague International Airport Prague 6 1074/32, Czech Republic

**Action Item:** Have meeting with CAA to present data on the value of business aviation to the Czech economy.