

GREENER FLIGHTS COMING TO ITALY SOON AS ITA AIRWAYS TO JOIN IRIS AIR TRAFFIC MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

The Italian flag carrier will be the first full service airline in Europe to join the ground-breaking programme by Inmarsat and European Space Agency (ESA)

08 March, 2023

Digitally-connected flights to and from Italy will be available from this summer, as ITA Airways rolls out the European Space Agency (ESA) and Inmarsat's ground-breaking Iris data link technology to the cockpits of its full aircraft fleet, contributing to airspace modernisation in Europe.

ITA Airways will be the first full service carrier in Europe to join Iris. The programme enables aircraft to fly more fuel-efficient routes by providing digital satellite communications to complement VHF data link, which is nearing a capacity crunch in congested airspace. Without fast and reliable data links between aircraft and the ground, air traffic managers cannot unlock the [8-10% reduction in CO₂ emissions identified by EUROCONTROL](#) from improved Air Traffic Management (ATM). Iris will allow ATM players to better anticipate and collaborate to maximise airspace use, reducing the impact of disruptions for passengers while reducing emissions.

The Italian national carrier will equip its full fleet of new Airbus A320neo and A330neo aircraft deliveries with Inmarsat's [SwiftBroadband-Safety](#) (SB-S), the award-winning platform flying on more than 230 aircraft globally, which powers Iris. Its aircraft will also play a significant role in Iris demonstration flights, which will take place across European airspace supported by 14 Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) during 2023.

This news comes as five more airlines have now equipped aircraft with Inmarsat SB-S, after Airbus' Light Cockpit Satcom (LCS) terminal became available to order in December 2022. Current SB-S users include Virgin Atlantic, Jet2, and Transavia Airlines, in addition to ITA Airways and easyJet.

Across the seven European airlines, 72 aircraft deliveries with Airbus LCS installed are anticipated during 2023-2024. Iris-capable Inmarsat terminals across many more of Europe's commercial airlines will further support the [Single European Sky ATM Research \(SESAR\) masterplan](#).

Alessio Leone, Head of Camo Operations, at ITA Airways said "ITA Airways was born to guarantee Italy quality connectivity with a strong focus on the environmental impact through an important investment made in a homogeneous and technologically advanced fleet, which in 2026 will be made up of 80% of new generation aircrafts becoming the greenest fleet in Europe. We are proud to join the Iris programme, which is fully in line with our growth strategy as it reflects two of the core pillars of ITA Airways: sustainability and innovation. ITA Airways is the first full service carrier in Europe with a new fleet fully equipped with this cutting-edge technology by Inmarsat Aviation, delivering operational and environmental benefits."

Joel Klooster, Inmarsat Aviation's Senior Vice President of Aircraft Operations and Safety, said "We are delighted to welcome ITA Airways as the second airline to join Iris, coming only months after easyJet was announced as the first airline. This shows the impressive momentum that continues to build around the programme as it heads towards commercial service introduction in Europe this year, followed by a full global rollout. Iris will mark a transformational step-change in air traffic management, delivering operational and environment benefits for airlines and the aviation industry as a whole, while also enhancing the flight experience for passengers."

Javier Benedicto, Acting Director of Telecommunications and Integrated Applications at ESA, said: “We are proud to support the space-enabled digitalisation of Europe’s skies, which will help to make aviation greener. ESA developed the Iris system in partnership with Inmarsat and we welcome ITA Airways as the first full service carrier and the second airline to sign up to use it. Investing in space improves life on Earth.”

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

ITA follows easyjet, which became [the first airline to join the programme](#) last June.

Photo caption: ITA Airways A320neo delivered in February 2023 fitted with Iris compatible satellite communications (image courtesy of ITA Airways)

ABOUT ITA AIRWAYS

ITA Airways is a company totally owned by the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance for the exercise of business in the air transport sector. ITA Airways aims at creating an efficient and innovative air carrier that will become a reference point in providing Italy with quality connectivity both in terms of international destinations, thus boosting tourism and foreign trade, and within the Country, also taking advantage of the train-air integrated mobility. ITA Airways will place the best customer service at the center of its strategy (through a strong digitization of processes that ensure a best-in-class experience and personalized services), combined with sustainability, in its environmental (new green and technologically advanced aircraft, use of sustainable fuels), social (equality and inclusion for a gender-neutral company) and governance (integration of sustainability into internal strategies and processes) aspects. ITA Airways is a member of SkyTeam alliance as of October 2021.

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ABOUT INMARSAT

[Inmarsat](#) delivers world leading, innovative, advanced and exceptionally reliable global, mobile communications across the world – in the air, at sea and on land - that are enabling a new generation of commercial, [government](#) and mission-critical services. Inmarsat is powering the digitalisation of the [maritime industry](#), making operations more efficient and safer than ever before. It is driving a new era of inflight passenger services for [aviation](#), while ensuring that aircraft can fly with maximum efficiency and safety. Furthermore, Inmarsat is [enabling the rapid expansion of the Internet of Things](#) (IoT) and enabling the next wave of world-changing technologies that will underpin the connected society and help build a sustainable future. And now Inmarsat is developing the first-of-its-kind, multi-dimensional communications network of the future, [ORCHESTRA](#).

In November 2021, Inmarsat and Viasat [announced the planned combination of the two companies](#), to create a new leader in global communications.

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ABOUT IRIS

Iris benefits airlines and ANSPs by bringing the bandwidth and reliability to allow digital exchanges between the aircraft and ground systems. System-to-system digital communication enables flights to be managed more efficiently through trajectory-based operations. These 4 Dimensional Trajectory-Based Operations (4D TBO) improve the management of airspace capacity, unlocking operational efficiency for airlines by avoiding holding patterns, accessing improved routes and optimum altitudes, and using continuous climb and descent pathways. The additional datalink capacity provided by SB-S will also

power a host of onboard digital applications, such as AI flight profile optimisers and real-time weather applications.

European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) certification of ESSP as the Communication Service Provider for the Iris data link service is nearing completion, and will mark the first air navigation service provider to own a pan-European certificate that allows cross-border delivery of air traffic management services.