IATA: more accidents but fewer fatalities in 2008
The International Air Transport Association published on Thursday data on the aviation safety performance for 2008. The total number of fatalities from aviation accidents dropped from 692 in 2007 to 502 in 2008, according to IATA. This resulted in a 56% improvement in the fatality rate from 0.23 fatalities per million passengers to 0.13 per million passengers. IATA said the global accident rate (measured in hull losses per million flights of Western-built jet aircraft) stood at 0.81 - or one accident for every 1.2 million flights (0.75 in 2007). According to IATA, there were 109 accidents in 2008 compared to 100 in 2007, while the number of fatal accidents increased from 20 in 2007 to 23 in 2008. Click here for more information.

Airbus to cut production, more possible
Airbus said on Thursday it will cut production rates for its A320 range of airplanes from October and halt the planned ramp-up of A330/A340 production. Production of the A320 family would be reduced to 34 from 36 a month, while the production rates of the A330/340 would remain at 8.5 a month. The manufacturer did not exclude further cuts in production. Delivery targets for this year remained unchanged and Airbus said that its decision for the time being would not affect jobs. It aims to deliver a similar number of airplanes this year as the last, when it delivered 483 planes, a record. Click here for more information.

Embraer to cut workforce by 20%, deliver fewer planes
Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica SA will cut its workforce by about 20% and deliver fewer planes than previously forecast this year because of the global recession. Embraer said the job reductions are concentrated in production and administrative areas and include the elimination of one layer of management. A “significant majority” of engineers will be kept on to develop new products. Embraer now predicts it will deliver 242 commercial and business planes this year, compared with a previous estimate of 270. The planemaker also reduced its 2009 revenue forecast by 1%. Click here for more information.

GAMA: Annual GA shipments down for first time in five years
The General Aviation Manufacturers Association announced on Tuesday that 2008 year-end worldwide shipments of general aviation airplanes decreased for the first time in five years. The deliveries reached 3,969 units, a 7.1% decrease over the previous year’s total of 4,272 airplanes. The piston airplane segment was down 20.8%, with 2,119 units delivered, compared to 2,675 in 2007. The turboprop segment experienced the strongest growth with shipments up nearly 1%. 535 turboprops were shipped, up from 459 units in 2007. Business jet shipments reached a new plateau in 2008 with a total of 1,315 airplanes, up 15.6% over the previous year’s figure of 1,138 airplanes. Click here for more information.

AEA: passengers down, “upheaval” to be “longer-lasting”
The 32 members of the Association of European Airlines transported 355.7 million passengers in 2008, a 1.5% decrease from 2007. Load factor was down 1.3 points to 76%. In its announcement, AEA compared the current downturn to the impact of the Chernobyl accident and bombing of Libya in 1986, the Persian Gulf War in 1991 and 9/11. December passenger numbers plunged 8% year-over-year to 24.5 million and load factor fell 0.4 point to 73.4%. Nineteen of AEA’s member airlines reduced seat capacity in December, eight of them by more than 10%. Click here for more information.

Air France GP7200-Powered A380 takes first flight
The first Air France A380, powered with Engine Alliance GP7200 engines, completed a 4-hour inaugural test route flight from Airbus, Toulouse on 12 February. The aircraft flew to Airbus Hamburg on 16 February, where it will be painted in Air France livery, and its interior will be customised for the airline. The A380 is scheduled for delivery to Air France in October. It is the first of 12 A380s Air France has on order. Click here for more information.

North American airports set environmental targets
Airports Council International-North America has announced “ambitious airport environmental goals” to be achieved by members over the next 10 years. Among the goals are that every member airport "will strive to have an environmental policy statement by 2010" and an Environmental Management System by 2014 at large airports, 2016 at medium airports and 2019 at small airports. It also set specific target dates in areas affecting local air quality, climate, noise, energy conservation, waste management and water quality. The goals include
widespread introduction of low-emission ground vehicles and loading bridges equipped with pre-conditioned air and power, increased recycling, water conservation and spill reduction training. Click here for more information.

**Boeing achieves environmental goal**
Boeing announced this week that all of its major manufacturing facilities received the internationally recognised ISO 14001 environmental certification by the end of 2008, marking achievement of one of the company's most significant environmental goals. The manufacturer has established aggressive targets to improve by 25% greenhouse gas emissions intensity, energy efficiency and recycling rates at its major manufacturing facilities by 2012, with a similar goal for hazardous waste reduction. Click here for more information.

**100 years of powered flight in Canada**
On 23 February 1909 the Silver Dart, designed by a team led by the world-renowned inventor Alexander Graham Bell, flew from the frozen surface of the Bras d'Or lake near Baddeck, Canada. The aircraft rose nine meters into the air and flew for almost a kilometre and a half at 65 kilometres per hour. This was the first powered flight in the history of Canada, which is celebrating the centennial this Monday 23 February. You can find more information and historical photos here.

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**Regional GDP per inhabitant in the EU27 varies considerably**
In 2006, GDP per inhabitant, expressed in terms of purchasing power standards, in the EU27's regions (NUTS-2) ranged from 25% of the EU27 average in the region of Nord-Est in Romania, to 336% of the average in Inner London in the UK, according to data released by Eurostat. The four leading regions in the ranking of regional GDP per inhabitant in 2006 were Inner London, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (267%), Brussels (233%) and Hamburg (200%). The twenty lowest regions in the ranking were in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Romania, with the lowest figures recorded in Nord-Est in Romania and Severozapaden in Bulgaria (both 25% of the average). Click here for more information.

**Commission outlines policy priorities for 2010**
The Commission presented this week its Annual Policy Strategy, outlining policy objectives in four areas: economic and social recovery, climate change and sustainable Europe, putting the citizen first, and Europe as a world partner. These priorities will be subject to a dialogue with the other institutions before being confirmed by the new Commission. Among the files deserving political attention in 2010 are: the follow-up to the December 2009 Copenhagen conference on a new international agreement on climate change; implementation of the Stockholm programme in the area of freedom, security and justice; and the next phase of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. Click here for more information.

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**Kölle Alaaf – also in English**
For those staying in Cologne this weekend, the official site of the Festive Committee of the Cologne Carnival offers information on carnival's history and this year's programme of events, also in English. Click here for more information.

**Two Shopping nights planned for Cologne in 2009**
Following the success of Cologne’s first Shopping night last year, two new dates have been set for 2009: on 2 May and 10 October the shops in the city's centre will remain open until midnight, accompanied by an entertainment and culinary programme. Furthermore, as of 6 March, the shops will remain open until 21.00 on Fridays. Click here for more information.

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