



ITA AIRWAYS FIRST FULL-SERVICE AIRLINE TO JOIN INMARSAT AND ESA IRIS PROGRAMM

News / Airlines



Digitally-connected flights to and from Italy will be available from this summer, as ITA Airways rolls out the European Space Agency and Inmarsat 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. 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 SwiftBroadband-Safety, 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 commented: "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."



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