

and SAS Link will fly from Copenhagen, starting in early 2022. Depending on how the business develops, the SAS Connect network could be expanded to Oslo and Stockholm during the course of the year. While the rumor had been circulating since mid-September, when the management informed the unions that it would create two new, independent subsidiaries that would have their own air operator certificates, the company had not confirmed anything until today.

SAS Connect will have nine Airbus A320neo family aircraft (the parent company has a fleet of 45 of the model). SAS Link, in turn, will operate six Embraer 195s, to be delivered in the first half of 2022, and will handle the group's regional flights within the Northern European region. Together, the new subsidiaries will expand the existing platforms in which SAS will operate to four: SAS Scandinavia, SAS Connect, SAS Link, and the group's wet-lease arm.

Anko van der Werff, Group President and CEO, told [Airinsight](#) that Connect and Link are part of the airline's new strategy to further improve its competitiveness and respond with agility to changes in the market, particularly the drop in demand for business travel. «The goal of enhancing the operating model is to ensure that SAS has the ability to expand its operations profitably as the market recovers», the executive said. «The model will provide more flexibility and reduce operational complexity.»

Continuing, he added: «We have to transform our business. We are a seasonality-based industry, which means that during peaks of activity we have to increase production and at other times we have to reduce it. And, above all, we have to do it quickly in both directions. Therefore, being flexible will continue to be key, and is one of the main reasons for introducing these new platforms».

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While the use of three different airlines for commercial operations may seem complex to customers, Van der Werff explained that they

will operate under the SAS name and that the different denominations will be for internal use only. «At this time we have no intention of independently marketing the services of the different platforms – everything will operate under the SAS brand», he said.

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