Press release
Madrid, November 10, 2021

Repsol and Vueling team up on the airline's first sustainable fuel flight

- Repsol and Vueling today completed the airline's first flight with fuel of sustainable origin. The flight was made on occasion of the beginning of the Tourism Innovation Summit in Seville, which will analyze sustainability and innovation in the tourism sector.
- Operated with the new generation Airbus A320neo, the flight avoided 2.5 tonnes of CO_2 thanks to improved energy efficiency and the use of biofuel, constituting another step towards the decarbonization of aviation.
- The two companies have signed a collaboration agreement to create a working group to advance the introduction of sustainable fuel in the airline's day-to-day operations.
- Aena supports this initiative and is working on collaborative projects to promote sustainable fuel production with the aim of encouraging its use by Airlines.
- Repsol, a pioneer in the manufacture of sustainable fuels in Spain, has supplied the biofuel used on the flight, produced from sustainable vegetable oils at its Tarragona Industrial Complex.
- With this first flight, Vueling is making progress in its commitment to alternative aviation fuels that are produced from fully sustainable raw materials such as urban waste or biomass.

Vueling, an airline of IAG group, today completed the airline's first flight using sustainable fuel, on the Barcelona-Seville route. Repsol, a pioneer in the manufacture of these kind of fuels in Spain, has supplied the SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuels) used in the flight, produced at its Tarragona Industrial Complex using biomass. The company has also produced a similar batch at the refinery in Puertollano and another one, from waste, at the Petronor refinery, a Repsol Group facility located in Bilbao.

This low carbon footprint flight from Barcelona to Seville has avoided the emission of 2.5 tonnes of CO_2, thanks to the efficiency provided by the new generation Airbus A320neo, the use of biofuel and the efficiency procedures implemented. Vueling has the third most modern fleet in Europe, as of 2019. with its new A320neo.

The plane took off from the Josep Tarradellas Barcelona - El Prat airport at 9:10 a.m. and landed in Seville where the Tourism Innovation Summit (TIS) begins today which for the next three days will analyze sustainability and innovation in the tourism sector. In addition, today the global transition to zero-emission transport is being debated at the COP26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. Vueling believes that governments should encourage research and development of these types of fuels to accelerate its use and its results can be immediate.

Vueling has carried out a number of initiatives to reduce its emissions as much as possible since 2012. The aircraft, which has covered the 820 kilometers from Barcelona to Seville, has avoided the emission of around 63 kg of CO_2 thanks to weight reduction initiatives.

For example, Vueling has replaced all the seats in its fleet with a new, lighter model, the Slim Seats, and it has digitalized all the documentation on its aircraft, eliminating 75 kg of paper per flight. Additionally, the company's pilots carry out a series of operational efficiency measures such as optimal flap configuration (ailerons whose function is to increase the aircraft's lift at low speeds), applying an optimal flight level and speed, as well as other initiatives that allowed today's flight to reduce 81 kg of CO_2 emissions.

Aena, in line with its role as promoter and facilitator of the sector in the decarbonization of air transport, supports this initiative and is working on collaborative projects to promote sustainable fuel production with the aim of encouraging its use by airlines.

Collaboration agreement

This initiative is part of the collaboration agreement signed between Repsol and Vueling to create a working group and advance the introduction of sustainable fuels in day-to-day aeronautical operations. The aim is to promote sustainable mobility in the aviation sector through the development and consumption of new fuels with a low environmental impact. It has a special focus on the promotion of research of the latest generation of alternative aviation fuels including, in the short term, fuels produced with fully sustainable raw materials, such as urban waste or biomass and, in the medium and long term, renewable hydrogen, among others.

These sustainable fuels will be the safest and most efficient option in the coming years for reducing emissions in air transport, where electrification is not currently viable and renewable hydrogen still requires a higher degree of technological maturity.

With this flight, Vueling advances in its commitment to sustainable fuels for aviation, to meet the challenge of decarbonization in the aviation industry. Marco Sansavini, Chairman of Vueling, said that "Vueling's commitment to the environment is all-encompassing." "This first flight using sustainable fuel is a big step in our commitment to reduce our CO_2 emissions and the use of 10% of SAF by 2030. A confirmation of the feasibility of using the latest generation of aviation fuels that use completely sustainable sources such as urban waste and biomass as raw materials," he said.

For his part, Javier Sancho, Director of the Repsol Industrial Complex in Tarragona, said that "given the importance of biofuels in reducing emissions, Repsol has been working for 15 years to develop different low carbon footprint solutions applied to transport. It is a pioneer in the manufacture of sustainable aviation fuels in Spain, such as the batch of biojet manufactured in Tarragona that has been used in this flight. The production of biofuels is one of the main axes in Repsol's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan that aims to transforming the company's industrial business and step up its commitments to reach carbon neutrality by 2050".

Decarbonization of the aviation sector

The aviation sector is moving decisively towards decarbonization through the use of biofuels. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has set itself the target of zero carbon-emissions growth from 2020 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050. To achieve this it is developing various initiatives, including the use of various sustainable fuels, such as biofuels and advanced biofuels produced from waste, which significantly contribute to the sector's reduction of CO_2 emissions.

On July 14, the European Commission presented the Fit for 55 package that includes the RefuelEU Aviation initiative. Its aim is to boost the supply and demand of sustainable aviation fuels in the European Union, reaching a use of 2% in 2025, 5% in 2030, and 63% in 2050. Thus, the environmental footprint of aviation is reduced while, at the same time, contributing to the achievement of the European Union's climate targets.

Repsol is a pioneer in the manufacture of sustainable aviation fuels in Spain, and with the production of sustainable fuels at its industrial complexes, Repsol is ahead of the different measures that European institutions have established to promote the use of sustainable aviation fuels. In this sense, both SAF obtained from biomass and advanced biofuel from waste are included in the list of sustainable fuels in the European Directive on Renewable Energies.

Goal of zero net emissions by 2050

IAG, the group to which Vueling belongs, was the first airline group in Europe to commit to operating 10% of its flights with sustainable aviation fuels by 2030. Vueling, as part of IAG, shares the vision of leading the way towards a sustainable global airline industry. That is why the company develops all its actions within the framework of the Flightpath Net Zero program, through which it has set the goal of achieving zero net CO_2 emissions by 2050.

Repsol aims to lead the energy transition, in line with the Paris Agreement, to limit the increase in global temperatures to well below 2ºC. The promotion of sustainable fuels is in addition to the projects that Repsol has already deployed in energy efficiency, low-emission electricity generation, renewable hydrogen, circular economy, synthetic fuels, and capture, use, and storage of CO_2, and it is one of the main strategic axes of the company to become zero net emissions by 2050.

The company has had a circular economy strategy in place since 2018, embodied in more than 230 initiatives. It has the ambition to re-use three million tons of waste annually by 2030, as raw material for its products. In October 2020, Repsol announced the construction of Spain's first advanced biofuels plant, which will be commissioned in 2023. It will be located in Cartagena and will have an annual capacity of 250,000 tons of biofuels produced from waste that is valid for cars, trucks, and airplanes.

In the port of Bilbao, in the vicinity of the Petronor refinery, Repsol plans to build one of the world's largest synthetic fuel plants, using renewable hydrogen and CO_2 as the only raw materials. This facility will be put into operation in 2024 and will have a capacity of more than 2,100 tons per year.

In addition, technological progress and the deployment of current and future projects has enabled the company to increase the ambition in its carbon intensity reduction targets set out in its 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The new decarbonization pathway to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 establishes a reduction in the Carbon Intensity Indicator of 15% in 2025, 28% in 2030, and 55% in 2040 compared to the previous targets of 12%, 25%, and 50%, respectively.

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