



SCANDINAVIA EXPANSION

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Brussels-headquartered GSE provider TCR began operations in Norway in 2011 - and it is continuing to grow its footprint in the surrounding region

In February TCR inaugurated its Swedish affiliate under a long-term agreement with SAS at three Swedish airports (Stockholm Arlanda, Göteborg Landvetter and Malmö). The deal includes three workshops and over 1,200 pieces of equipment, and employs 25 staff. Jon Elvenes, general manager at TCR Scandinavia, successfully managed the start-up of operations on 1 February. He comments: "The transfer went very well and we took over a highly motivated group of staff. Operations started well and we are aiming to increase efficiency by implementing our processes and systems. In Norway, for instance, we have improved the GSE availability for SAS Ground Handling by 8 percentage points in six months."

TCR describes its entry into the Swedish market as "a major step forward for TCR in Northern Europe". Its expansion into Scandinavia started four years ago at Oslo airport, with a sale and rent-back of all Menzies' GSE. This was followed in 2012 by contracts with Aviator and in 2014 with SAS at the same airport. TCR's

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Other Scandinavian contracts are expected to materialise over the course of 2015. The rental company estimates that the Scandinavia region, whilst becoming more and more competitive, will continue to grow. This, in turn, will generate a need for greater flexibility in the face of changing demands.

Over the last six years, TCR has more than doubled its total GSE fleet to over 20,000 units, of which 4,000 are in use in Scandinavia. "This development is a consequence of an overall acceptance of the GSE rental concept by the market and the continued investment by TCR in absolute customer satisfaction all along," comments Tom Bellekens, chief operational officer of TCR Group.

More generally, there has been an acceleration of the GSE rental demand during the last years. This is due on the one hand to the financial crisis, which prompted the search for alternatives to keep capital available while the level of handling services

remained optimal. On the other hand, operational leasing, which was a new concept in the ground handling sector less than 10 years ago, has proved to be a valuable solution, offering reliable equipment that is available at all times. The need for increased flexibility, linked to a general trend for continuous cost optimisation in Europe, puts a lot of pressure on the maintenance of GSE. There is, in fact, less GSE for the same availability ratio expectation. Maintenance performance needs to be at its best in order to be able to answer today's tough economic and operational requirements. TCR says the rental concept works: indeed, the company has a 96% customer retention rate and its business with existing customers continues to grow. Its equipment is deployed in 78 stations, it employs more than 550 people and it manages 38 maintenance workshops.

This achievement would be impossible without a permanent dialogue and very close partnerships with most of the big players of the industry, something TCR undertakes with the greatest care, the company concludes. AGS