

Transatlantic test for Airbus low-cost airliner

February 13 2018, by Djallal Malti



The Airbus A321 neo LR(long range) test plane is making its maiden flight across the Atlantic on Tuesday

The long-range version of Airbus's updated single-aisle aircraft took off Tuesday on a flight from Paris to New York in what could be a boon for low-cost flights across the Atlantic.

The A321neo LR is essentially taking a workhorse of the medium-haul market that is widely used by low-cost airlines and extending its range so it can handle the transatlantic and similar routes.

Airbus believes that the plane will help airlines open new market segments and routes.

"You can look at it as a step towards the democratisation of long-haul flights where a students on a budget could pay just a bit more for a Paris to New York ticket than what they pay now to fly from Paris to Toulouse" in the south of France," said Cedric Favrichon, an engineer on the [flight](#).

Like other Airbus's other 'neo' aircraft, the A321neo LR uses new engines and has other design features meant to conserve considerable amounts of fuel, one of the greatest costs for airlines.

The low-cost sector has yet to make much inroads into the transatlantic segment, partially due to the lack of a suitable aircraft.

The only other single-aisle aircraft that made transatlantic flights, Boeing's 757, is no longer in production and occasionally needed to stop for fuel if winds were strong.

Low-cost Norwegian, which is making transatlantic flights with Boeing's widebody Dreamliner, has ordered 30 A321neo LR aircraft.

Airbus has received more than 100 orders for the aircraft.

The European aircraft maker believes that in addition to transatlantic flights it could also be used for routes such as Dubai-Beijing, Kuala Lumpur-Tokyo or Singapore-Sydney where long-haul carriers are currently needed.

Airbus is hoping to obtain certification from US and EU regulators in the coming months for the aircraft so it may enter service by the end of the year.

Boeing is expected to make a decision this year whether it will launch an aircraft in this segment, which it estimates at some 4,000 [aircraft](#).

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