

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### ETIHAD REGIONAL LEASES FOUR ATR 72-500 AIRCRAFT

Etihad Regional today announced an agreement to lease four ATR 72-500 aircraft, which will see the carrier boost its regional fleet to 12 and support its rapidly expanding network.

All four aircraft are scheduled for delivery between April and June 2014, with the first touching down at Geneva International Airport on 1 April. The airline currently operates a fleet of eight 50-seat Saab 2000 turboprop aircraft.

Etihad Regional will configure each aircraft with 68 seats. Passenger comfort will be second to none thanks to a well-designed cabin and large overhead bins.

The lease of the aircraft was arranged by Nordic Aviation Capital (NAC), the world's largest turboprop leasing company headquartered in Billund, Denmark.

The fleet announcement was made at a joint Etihad Regional-ATR media conference this morning in Lugano, and comes after the Swiss-based airline's recent announcement of a number of new routes, several of which have already been launched.

Maurizio Merlo, Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Regional said: "Today's announcement marks the beginning of our new fleet expansion program. It is part of our strategy of matching our growing network and frequency requirements with the right aircraft.

"Choosing ATR for this transaction is a logical step. The ATR aircraft have the lowest seat-mile costs in their class, are ideally suited for regional operations, can operate in all-weather types, and have relatively low engine and airframe maintenance costs. The ATR 72-500s are not only known for their reliability and technology but are also the top-selling turboprop aircraft on the market."

Peter Baumgartner, Vice Chairman of Etihad Regional said: "The comfort and configuration of the new aircraft will help rejuvenate Etihad Regional's fleet and further boost its product quality, while enabling the expansion of regional operations.

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“These aircraft will allow Etihad Regional to expand the number of routes it operates, as they link key European regional towns and cities with the rest of our network, and with the hubs of Etihad Airways and its equity partners, thus being a key enabler in improving access for travellers throughout Europe.”

Filippo Bagnato, Chief Executive Officer of ATR said: “We are delighted that Etihad Regional has chosen ATR and we are excited to help support the carrier’s growth plans. With ATR 72-500, Etihad Regional will operate modern aircraft which not only offer high economic efficiency and exceptional passenger comfort, but also have minimal impact on the environment.”

Martin Møller, Chairman of NAC said: “We are delighted to be working with Etihad Regional in this period of growth for the airline and look forward to a very productive and long-term relationship. Our large portfolio of regional aircraft combined with our knowledge and experience enabled us to quickly respond and deliver a high-quality fleet leasing solution uniquely tailored to meet the needs of Etihad Regional.”

Etihad Regional has already commenced crew recruitment for the four ATR 72-500s, and expects to hire a total of 40 cabin crew members to operate the new fleet type. The airline is also hiring 16 captains and 16 first-officers, bringing the airline’s total pilot count to 115.

**Photograph caption:** Etihad Regional Chief Executive Officer, Maurizio Merlo, Etihad Regional Vice Chairman, Peter Baumgartner and ATR Chief Executive Officer Filippo Bagnato celebrate the new ATR 72-500 fleet deal.

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### **About Etihad Regional, Operated by Darwin Airline**

Etihad Regional is the new European brand operated by Swiss-based regional carrier, Darwin Airline, founded in 2003. It serves a range of key secondary markets in Europe and offers long-haul and international destinations across Europe, Australia, Asia, Middle East, Africa and the Americas through its future 33.3 per cent shareholding equity and codeshare partner, Etihad Airways. The airline currently operates two-class flights with a fleet of eight 50-seat Saab 2000 turboprop aircraft to a network stretching from southern Italy to the UK. The airline’s major hub is the Swiss city of Geneva. For more information, please visit [www.etihadregional.com](http://www.etihadregional.com).

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