

Air Serbia plans to wet-lease a 148-seat Boeing 737-700 aircraft from Czech carrier Smartwings over the summer, EX-YU Aviation News has learnt. The aircraft is expected to arrive in Belgrade towards the end of next week, although changes remain possible. The jet is expected to be deployed on charter flights, as well as a select number of scheduled services out of Belgrade such as Rome, Milan and Tirana. A total of four groups of Smartwings crew will be stationed in Belgrade to operate the aircraft. The development comes as Air Serbia ramps up both its scheduled and charter network due to growing demand.

Air Serbia and Smartwings have concluded an ACMI lease agreement, meaning the Czech carrier will provide aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance. Smartwings is the Czech Republic's largest airline group, dominating the country's aviation market. The carrier has vast experience in ACMI, wet-leasing aircraft and crew to airlines in France, Austria, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia over the summer, as well as Canada in winter. It is also the owner of the country's national carrier Czech Airlines and one of the largest leisure operators in Central Europe. Its fleet consist of over forty aircraft.

Air Serbia's existing fleet comprises of eighteen aircraft, including eleven Airbus A319s, one A320 and A330 each, as well as five ATR72 turboprops. The airline disbanded its dedicated charter brand Aviolet earlier this year after retiring its last three remaining Boeing 737-300 aircraft. The carrier currently maintains scheduled operations to over thirty destinations, as more routes are restored across its network. It has also committed to operating over 800 charter flights this summer, with services to Hurghada and Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt, Antalya, Bodrum and Dalaman in Turkey, as well as Rhodes, Crete, Skiathos, Corfu, Kefalonia, Zakynthos and other popular destinations in Greece. The airline saw its busiest month this May since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, handling over 100.000 passengers and recording an average cabin load factor of 62% across its network. Source: www.exyuaviation.com