

The Oyonnair's Piaggio reinforce the flights against the Covid-19 coronavirus.

Four Piaggio Avanti II from the Lyon-Bron-based business aviation company Oyonnair are involved in the evacuation of patients from the Grand East Covid-19.

The turboprops are operating where the Air Force A330 Phoenix cannot be used .

03/28.2020 by Gil Roy - Aerobuzz.fr -

<https://www.aerobuzz.fr/aviation-generale/les-piaggio-doyonnair-en-renfort-dans-le-combat-contre-le-covid-19/>



The evacuation of Covid-19 patients from the Greater Eastern Region (Grand-Est Region) in France, highlights the role of local airports.

The four Piaggio operated by Oyonnair made their first rotations on Friday March 27, 2020. They continued the next day and they are already scheduled for Sunday March 29. "With the exception of the first day when we were called at 10:00 am to take off at 2:00 pm, we receive a call around 10:00 pm for the next day," explains Daniel Vovk, the Oyonnair's General Manager, who is used to work in emergency. Medical evacuations represent the main part of its activity, and the transport of organs a third.

(Note : Oyonnair also transports passengers for up to 10% of its total turnover).

The flights given to Oyonnair by the crisis cell of the Ministry of Health are part of the evacuation of Covid-19 patients from the Grand-Est region, to regions still untouched by the epidemic. So far, the Piaggios have loaded their patients at Dôle and Montbéliard, then evacuated them to the New Aquitaine Region. Each plane carries two patients accompanied by two members of the medical team of the SAMU (local health unit), with rotations twice a day.



Oyonnair has developed expertise in medical evacuations, its core business.

The plane takes off from Lyon-Bron and first goes to search for the hospital's SAMU team which will receive the patient. Then it goes to the Grand Est Region making two round trips before returning to its home base.

If the SAMU accompanying team is coming from the hospital from which the patients are evacuated, the assistants will then have to be escorted back to their home base before returning to Lyon-Bron.

"We expect the crews to take off around 8:00 am and be back around 6:00 pm after having made two rotations and six stages, that is to say between 4 and 7 hours of flight during the day," explains Daniel Vovk.

A dozen pilots volunteered for these missions. "We have chosen not to have aged pilots, or those who have children or have health problems." Oyonnair employs around twenty pilots.



Oyonnair operates a fleet of 5 Piaggio Avanti II (translator's note : actually the correct number should be 9 Piaggios) and 4 Citation Mustang. © Oyonnair / Aerobuzz.fr



The Piaggio Avanti II cabin can accommodate two stretchers. © Oyonnair / Aerobuzz.fr

Needless to say that, as part of the Covid-19 missions, crews must comply with strict instructions defined by SAMU 69. A specific sanitization routing has been put in place for pilots on their return back to the home base. Contaminated equipment, in particular flight suits, are stored in a dedicated place



"Go to". Thanks to the air traffic controllers who are very cooperative in such an empty sky, the Oyonnair's pilots can operate direct flight with evident advantages in terms of efficiency. © Oyonnair / Aerobuzz.fr

In flight, pilots wear a FFP2 protective mask, a rare commodity provided by SAMU 69, as well as gloves. The antimicrobial flight suits were recovered by the company in a bodyshop. There is some one hundred available. The shortage even affects those on the front line ...

The aircraft must also be decontaminated with special products according to a procedure identical to that of the ambulances of the SAMU. It takes about an hour and a half.



Oyonnair pilots are also on the front line in the fight against the Covid-19. © Oyonnair / Aerobuzz.fr

Daniel Vovk and his team feel that they are engaged in an operation that could last a long time. They are also aware that rotations will evolve over the days, with the geographic development of the epidemic. Less publicized than the Air Force's A330 Phoenix, the Oyonnair's Piaggios do remarkable work, just a vital one.

At 8:00 p.m. when you applaud the caregivers from your window or balcony, also have a thought for the pilots and mechanics at Oyonnair. They are part of the same army.

