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airberlin and WheelTug sign declaration of intent for electric drive system

airberlin is a pioneer in the area of eco-efficient flying. With a view to further consolidating this role, the company is keenly pursuing and supporting the development of new innovative technologies that are capable of contributing to further increases in efficiency.

As a result of this approach, airberlin is one of the first airlines in the world to be engaged in discussions with the company WheelTug regarding an innovative electric drive system. WheelTug and airberlin have already signed a corresponding letter of intent, which gives Germany's second largest airline the opportunity to become one of the world's first airlines to install the system on part of its fleet after the drive technology has been certified. The letter of intent includes the option to carry out the installation on 47 Boeing 737NG aircraft and 63 aircraft from the Airbus A320 family. WheelTug relies on the use of an electric motor which is built into the nose wheel and is intended to enable pilots to taxi from the gate to the runway without powering up the engines.

Felix Genze, Vice President Performance Improvement airberlin, said: "We believe in the potential of innovative technologies. airberlin already leads the way in Europe with an average fuel consumption of just 3.4 litres per 100 passenger kilometres. We are constantly on the lookout for new technologies and procedures with a view to further consolidating this position. The agreement with WheelTug perfectly fits in with our commitment and illustrates once again that we are at the forefront of innovation when it comes to new technologies."

Isaiah Cox, CEO WheelTug, said: "We have found airberlin to be a company that is always open to new approaches and ideas. We are therefore delighted that Germany's second largest airline is interested in our innovative electric drive system. This system is capable of achieving fuel savings of up to 80% on the ground and consequently is also able to reduce CO2 and noise emissions."

So far, the airberlin Performance Improvement department has developed around 55 measures to improve all the processes involved in flying and is constantly examining the use of innovative technologies.

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