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Air France KLM Martinair Cargo ready to distribute Covid-19 vaccines

Since the 3rd week of March 2020, Air France KLM Martinair Cargo has made every effort to maintain its global airfreight network, helping to keep vital supply chains in place. This has always been essential, but even more so since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring that healthcare facilities as well as private citizens have access to medicines, medical equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE) and other critical products. Approximately 6,000 cargo-only flights have been carried out in recent months. Air France KLM Martinair Cargo is currently operating services to more than 100 long-haul destinations.

One of the next logistical challenges will be the global distribution of the Covid-19 vaccines. Earlier this week, the American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, together with German partner BioNTech, announced great success in the first interim analysis from the Phase III study of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate.

In terms of volume, distributing the vaccines will be an unprecedented logistical operation. Initial expectations are that around 15 billion vaccines will need to be distributed worldwide. Many of these will also need to be distributed at very low temperatures. The Pfizer vaccine must be kept deep frozen (at -70 degrees Celsius). Others will need to be distributed at a constant temperature of between +2 and +8 degrees Celsius. This means that logistical solutions will be essential to maintain quality throughout the vaccine distribution chain.

Senior Vice President Sales & Distribution Air France KLM Martinair Cargo GertJan Roelands: *“Air France KLM Martinair Cargo has years of experience with temperature-controlled transportation of pharmaceuticals and was the first airline group to be CEIV certified by IATA. The distribution of Covid-19 vaccines poses specific challenges in terms of volume, transportation requirements and security. In order to be fully prepared for this we started a Covid-19 Vaccine taskforce four months ago. This taskforce represents all the relevant Air France KLM Martinair Cargo departments. Our teams have been working on an extensive action plan. For example, at our Schiphol Pharma Hub, we opened up a 1,118 m3 Climate Controlled storage facility a few months ago and we are building an additional 2,061 m3 additional Cool Room. At our Charles de Gaulle Pharma Hub, a new Climate Controlled storage area is about to be finished. We also introduced Hybrid and Advanced Passive Solutions that will be used to transport the vaccines, on top of existing full range of Active Containers. Along with many other initiatives, extra monitoring and intervention management have also been implemented.”*

Executive Vice President Air France-KLM Cargo Adriaan den Heijer: *“We believe that cooperation and building communities around the upcoming global vaccines distribution are essential. We’ve established partnerships with many of the parties in the logistical chain, including forwarders, trucking companies, container providers, airports, cargo/logistical associates, pharmaceutical companies and healthcare-related institutes and authorities. We believe that strong cooperation between partners will be essential to successfully executing this logistical challenge.”*

Together with Air Cargo Netherlands (ACN) and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol and with Aéroport de Paris (already two leading European Pharma hubs), we’ve established two taskforces to fully prepare both airports communities for upcoming vaccine transport operations.

Adriaan den Heijer: *“In recent weeks, we successfully shipped the first Covid-19 vaccines. Air France KLM Martinair Cargo is ready for this logistical challenge, ready to deliver coronavirus vaccines to the Netherlands, to France and to many other countries around the globe.”*



About Air France KLM Martinair Cargo

The Air France-KLM Group is a global airline group with a strong European base. Its main areas of business are passenger transport, cargo transport and aeronautical maintenance. Air France KLM Martinair Cargo is the Air France-KLM Group’s dedicated air cargo business. Air France-KLM Cargo is a member of SkyTeam Cargo (www.skyteamcargo.com) offering an even larger network coverage.

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