

## Finnair studies future narrowbody fleet

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Finnair A321  
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Finnair is planning to increase traffic on its European feeder network with an eye on growing long-haul capacity. As a first step, Finnair will temporarily lease two Airbus A321 narrowbody aircraft, including part of the flight crew

A source close to the deal told *ATW* that both A321s could be wet leased from Austria-based airberlin subsidiary FlyNiki.

Finnair CEO Pekka Vauramo told *ATW* recently in Vienna the Finland flag carrier is “adding some capacity to our feeder traffic by upgauging our aircraft size in order to enable our growth.” Because its new Airbus A350 XWB is growing long-haul traffic, “we also need more capacity on feeder routes between Europe and Helsinki,” he said.

Finnair’s narrowbody fleet used on its European network is already being efficiently utilized, and the passenger load factors are high. Hence, the company is planning to downsize its smaller set-capacity Embraer fleet and retire one ATR aircraft.

Overall, Finnair is looking for way to increase narrowbody capacity and is assessing the best alternatives for growth. Finnair has already begun recruiting pilots and cabin crew.

Vauramo told *ATW* the carrier is evaluating which type of aircraft it should acquire for its future narrowbody fleet. “We are still open at this moment [to talk with all major aircraft manufacturers] and must decide [on an aircraft type] by the end of this year. The number of new aircraft we need will remain the same as what we currently have,” Vauramo said.

The oneworld member took delivery of its first [A350-900 XWB](#) aircraft on Oct. 7, 2015, and should take delivery of five more of the type at the beginning of the 2016 second quarter, seven by the end of 2016, 11 by the end of 2017, and 19 by the end of 2023.

Some of the new A350s will add to Finnair’s fleet numbers, while some will replace widebody aircraft with smaller passenger capacity.

Eventually, Finnair is considering operating its own A350 simulator, but it will take a couple of years to reach the training volume necessary to make that investment.

Finnair’s strategic objective is to double its traffic between Asia and Europe by 2020 from the 2010 level.

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