PRIVATE OPERATOR ACR TAKES OVER MORE TOWERS

The deregulation of air traffic services (ATS) at Swedish airports has taken off well and since the end of 2013 the private Swedish company ACR Aviation Capacity Resources is now operating the control towers at nine of the country’s 36 airports. ACR more than doubled their business when the company took over the towers at the airports in Kalmar, Jönköping, Norrköping, Karlstad and Skellefteå on 1st January 2014.

Since 2010, when a new Swedish Civil Aviation Act came into force, airport owners have had the opportunity to procure local air traffic services. Earlier, the stately owned operator LFV had a monopoly on this business.

Said Wilhelm Wohlfahrt, CEO at ACR, “The takeover is the largest we have achieved so far and the implementation has been successful. We have the air traffic controllers in the five control towers and our good preparations to thank. We more than doubled our business and grew to about 65 employees overnight and there have only been positive reactions to it.”

ACR have operated air traffic services at the airports in Västerås, Växjö and Örebro, since 1st March 2011 and at Trollhättan airport since 1st January 2012. ACR handles both civil and military flights and meets the same safety requirements as other certified providers in Europe.

Deregulation has meant cost savings by up to 30% for the airports that procured the services from ACR.

Wohlfahrt added, “The savings that competitive bidding means may be crucial for smaller and medium sized airports’ survival. This is extremely important as regional Swedish airports are a significant feature of Swedish enterprise and play a central role for all people who live outside the metropolitan areas.”

For the five new airports the change of operator means cost savings of around 36 million SEK and gives them an opportunity to develop the airports without having to ask municipal or government owners for support, it is understood. While strengthening its competitiveness air traffic services are expected to be cheaper for the airlines.

“The change to the new operator has gone very well and we are very satisfied. Besides better economy we think it is good to have a new supplier who can look at opportunities for improvement and co-ordination with other activities with new eyes,” said Robert Lindberg, General Manager at Skellefteå Airport.
Totally the market for air traffic services in Sweden is estimated to amount to more than 900 million SEK.

Deregulation of air traffic services is moving ahead in Europe and today the market is competitive in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Spain and the UK, with more countries moving in the same direction including Norway, it is further understood.

**About ACR**

ACR Aviation Capacity Resources is claimed to be the first private company in Europe to provide air traffic services. ACR operates local air traffic control at nine Swedish airports. The mission for ACR is to operate air traffic services with the highest security and related businesses in a cost effective and streamlined manner.

The company was founded in spring 2004 by former SAS CEO Jan Carlzon as partner and chairman and is today run by an experienced management team and renowned board. Among others, both Jan Carlzon and former transport minister Ulrica Messing are members of the board under the chairman of Sebastian Ehrnrooth.