

Universal strengthens its European presence

Universal Weather and Aviation is developing and expanding its services in Europe, with a view to boosting its presence at key locations.

The company recently refurbished its facility at Le Bourget, expanding the hangar to accommodate BBJ-size aircraft, as well as upgrading ground handling equipment. Universal's offices are to move into an upgraded facility, featuring new vip lounges (see *EBAN's* next issue for full details).

Universal's operation in Rome has also been enhanced. "Universal Aviation Italy has been providing supervisory handling services in Rome for 19 years, as the only official ground handling company was ADR," said Jonathan Howells, regional director, Europe, Middle East and Africa.

"Last year Universal Aviation Italy was awarded a full handling license allowing us to provide a full and comprehensive range of services to our customers. We have purchased new ground handling equipment and

aircraft operating to Rome can now be fully handled by our own personnel, which will provide many service enhancements and cost savings."

In addition to developments in Europe, Howell's reports that business aviation in the Middle East is experiencing rapid growth. "Saudi Arabia remains the dominant market for business aviation in the Middle East, with a high proportion of business aircraft registered or based there.

"Kuwait is an important and developing business aviation market and our customers were asking us to take an active role in the handling market to improve the level of services and support available to them. Universal anticipates increased demand for its services from aircraft based in the region and those operating into the region, and has plans for further business developments in the region in the coming year."