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Finnair's vision of the future includes expansion into North America

When **Mika Vehvilainen** (48) joined **Finnair**, the national carrier of Finland, as its president and CEO in February 2010, he immediately set out to formulate a new vision for the future of Finnair: Finnair's Vision 2020.'

"Finnair's vision for 2020 is to be the number one airline in our home market, covering the Baltics and Scandinavia," notes Vehvilainen. "We want to be number one in terms of airline size, quality and financial health. I am optimistic that we are going to attain this goal through our long-term strategy that includes operational efficiency, reliability, innovation and distinctly personal service. Our success factors are quality, freshness and creativity - factors that make us the best."

"Finnair's other overarching goal for 2020 is to be the top choice for travelers between Europe and Asia, and possibly between North America and Asia. We are looking to create more North America routes, especially if these routes can be connected to our Asian network. Currently we code-share and connect in New York with our oneworld partner American Airlines to more than a dozen cities in North America, and are also discussing other forms of cooperation," continues Vehvilainen. "This could eventually lead to Finnair opening new routes between North America and Helsinki in partnership with American Airlines."

Michael Maass, Finnair's Sales Director for North America, adds, *"Already, our business travelers to Europe, the Baltics, Russia or Asia realize that Finnair is a smart choice in terms of time and money saved; currently, business class fares from New York to Asia start at \$3,199!"*

This summer, Finnair offers 10 flights per week between JFK and Helsinki, returning to daily scheduled service after September 13. Three flights (on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays) depart from JFK at 10:40 p.m., allowing New York-based business travelers to complete a full day at the office before crossing the Atlantic. Also, the later departure time will facilitate excellent connections on Finnair to its gateways in Asia, such as Beijing, Delhi, Hong Kong, Nagoya, Osaka, Seoul, Shanghai and Tokyo.

Currently, Finnair's global route network includes more than 50 international destinations, and 700 more through its cooperation with oneworld alliance partners.

Vicky Karantzavelou - Friday, July 02, 2010