



NEOS: the first international covid-free flight takes off

The first direct Covid-free flight from Milan Malpensa to Nanjing is the result of the collaboration between SEA, Gruppo San Donato, ATS Insubria, Lombardy Region and Neos.

Neos provides a third rapid swab test at the check-in to further reduce the risks for passengers and crew, in agreement with the Chinese Consulate General and the CAAC.

The first international Covid-free international flight to Nanjing took off today at 01:45 pm from Milan Malpensa airport. The direct connection is carried out by Neos, the Alpitour Group airline that already during the emergency of the past months has shown its close relationship of collaboration and support with the Chinese Institutions and the Italian Government.

The direct Neos flight, which links Milan Malpensa to Nanjing, is the only one currently operating between the two countries: the airline therefore wanted to insert a third rapid swab test during the check-in, so as to minimize the risks for the crew and passengers. **The test is added to the molecular swab test and the serological test, required by Chinese regulations** and it has to be carried out within 48 hours before departure. The passengers, previously warned, were welcomed at the airport and guided by the health care staff in the process of registration, implementation and communication of the swab test result. The test area has been set up in an area adjacent to the check-in area, with dedicated routes to ensure the correct distancing at each stage. **The further step included in the check-in phase was decided following the recommendation of the Chinese Consulate General and the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC):** the purpose is to prepare a strengthening of preventive measures against the transmission of the virus, preventing the interruption of businesses and flows between Italy and China. **Once the passengers have landed in Nanjing, a final swab test is carried out** to reconfirm the passengers' negative testing for Covid-19.

This first Covid-free flight took off full, just like the flights carried out by Neos in recent months to and from China: the trend accentuates the strategic importance of the route, essential to the economic fabric of both countries. In fact, since the connection was restored at the beginning of July, 58 flights have been made with the latest generation 787 Dreamliner aircraft, each of which has a maximum capacity of 75%, equivalent to 269 passengers on board.

The initiative was implemented thanks to the valuable collaboration between SEA, Group San Donato, ATS Insubria, Lombardy Region, whose contributions and authorizations were essential to the success of the program, which will continue on an experimental basis until 31 January 2021.

Carlo Stradiotti, CEO of Neos, states: "We are very satisfied with this important milestone achieved thanks to the valuable synergy between all the stakeholders involved. In recent months Neos has spent a significant amount of money on our country, carrying out humanitarian and repatriation flights. It is now essential to establish a procedure that lays the foundations for a shared protocol, preparatory to the start of a route

that will lead, with due caution, to the restart of air transport and the tourism sector. We hope that this can be a first step in that direction."

Armando Brunini, CEO of SEA: *"Pre-flight testing is a key tool to support air traffic, especially intercontinental traffic, as long as it is necessary to live with the virus. Today's Neos flight is an important first result. Another key step will be the creation of health corridors between states that guarantee Covid-free flights and reduce the need for quarantine. This operation is more complex and impossible to carry out without the support of the competent Ministries, with which we have already been in contact since September".*

*"We are very satisfied that our skills can contribute to the safety of the flights - says **Alberto Nughedu, CEO of the Resnati and Puntì Raf clinics of Gruppo San Donato** - Travelling safely means encouraging people to move to keep their human and professional relationships alive. Our healthcare personnel perform rapid antigen tests that provide passengers with an almost immediate response and, in addition, with this procedure we contribute to the tracking of contagions and to virus control"*

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