

= History of Braathens SAFE (1946 - 1993) =

Braathens South American & Far East Airtransport A / S or Braathens SAFE was founded by ship owner Ludvig G. Braathen in 1946 . It started as a charter airline based at Oslo Airport , Gardermoen in Norway , flying to destinations in the Far East and in South America . At first the airline used Douglas DC 4s , and later also Douglas DC 3s . In 1948 , the airline moved to Oslo Airport , Fornebu and started regular scheduled flights to the Far East . In 1952 , the airline started cooperation with the Icelandic airline Loftleidir , where until 1960 the two airlines in cooperation flew flights to Reykjavík . Domestic services started in 1951 , using de Havilland Herons on a route from Oslo to Stavanger via Tønsberg . Braathens SAFE also established at Stavanger Airport , Sola . A second route was started two years later to Trondheim . The Heron routes also stopped in Farsund , Kristiansand , Notodden to Stavanger and Hamar , Røros to Trondheim .

In 1958 , Braathens SAFE started flying to Ålesund and at the same time started flights along the West Coast . In 1959 , Fokker F 27s were taken into use , and with the Herons taken out of service , Hamar , Farsund and Tønsberg were terminated . During 1960 , the airline flew a single season to Sandefjord and Aalborg . The company also entered the domestic and international charter market during the 1960s , an industry where the airline would eventually grow to become a large Norwegian and Swedish contestant . Services to Bodø and Tromsø started in 1967 , although only from Western Norway . Braathens ' main domestic competitor was Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) , which operated all the primary domestic routes Braathens SAFE did not , in addition to the international routes . Braathens took Boeing 737 200s and Fokker F 28s into use in 1969 ; Kristiansund was first served in 1970 and Molde in 1972 . From 1984 , the airline also operated two Boeing 767s , although they were retired along with the F 28s in 1986 . Services to Longyearbyen started in 1987 . From 1987 , Braathens SAFE was allowed to make international scheduled flights on certain routes . In 1989 , it opened a route to Billund , in 1991 to Malmö , Newcastle and London , and in 1993 to Murmansk . From 1989 to 1994 , the airline replaced its fleet with Boeing 737 400 and -500s . From 1989 to 1994 , Braathens Helikopter operated services on contract with oil companies to their oil platforms in the North Sea .

= = Far East = =

Braathens South American & Far East Airtransport A / S was founded on 26 March 1946 by Ludvig G. Braathen through his shipping company Braathens Rederi . Share capital was NOK 4 million , plus loans from the shipping company . Braathens had made good money during World War II with the participation in the Norwegian Shipping and Trade Mission , and received permission to use US \$ 1 million to purchase aircraft . The idea to start an airline had occurred to Braathen in 1936 , when the ship Brajara had engine trouble while en route to Japan . The Japanese shipyards could not guarantee that they could repair the ship , and at first it was considered whether the ship should be towed to Europe for repairs . The solution chosen was instead to have the necessary piece made in Amsterdam and flown by KLM . Braathen wanted to have an airline that would be able to fly crew and supplies to his and other ships throughout the world ? primarily in the Far East .

Braathen traveled to the United States , where he bought several used Douglas C 54 (DC 4) aircraft from the United States Air Force . These were rebuilt by Texas Maintenance Company (Temco) in Fort Worth , Texas , giving them a capacity of 44 passengers , or 22 passengers and 4 tonnes (3 @ 9 long tons ; 4 @ 4 short tons) of cargo . Twenty pilots were recruited and sent to Fort Worth for certification . The first plane , LN HAV Norse Explorer , landed at Oslo Airport , Gardermoen on 26 December 1946 . The next planes were LN HAT Norse Skyfarer on 11 February 1947 and LN NAU Norse Trader on 13 March .

The first route ran from Oslo to Cairo via Copenhagen and Paris on 30 January 1947 . Afterwards , the company was chartered for several trips from Paris and Marseille , France , to Lydda , Palestine , and Tunis , Tunisia . From Lydda , the aircraft were used to evacuate French and British personnel prior to the creation of Israel . The company 's route to Hong Kong was the longest air route in the world . At the time , the only scheduled service to the Far East was operated by British Overseas

Airways Corporation using Sandringham flying boats . This route took a fortnight , while KLM had a land @-@ plane route from Amsterdam to Batavia (Djarkarta) . The first Braathens SAFE flight was made on 24 February from Oslo , landing at Amsterdam , Marseille , Cairo , Basra , Karachi , Calcutta and Bangkok before Hong Kong , where Norske Skyfarer landed on 8 March . Total flight time was 46 hours . Along the route , Braathens SAFE established contracts with agents , or stationed their own employees .

The regular services could be done with a round trip time of nine to ten days , including overnighing in Cairo , Karachi and Bangkok , and with technical revision of the plane in Hong Kong . At first there were semiweekly services , but by the end of 1947 , these had increased to weekly . In June , Braathens SAFE bought a Douglas DC @-@ 3 , LN @-@ PAS Norse Carrier , and in August another DC @-@ 4 , LN @-@ PAW Norse Commander , both from KLM . In 1947 , Braathens SAFE flew twenty @-@ five trips to Hong Kong , five to New York and one to Johannesburg , South Africa , making a profit of NOK 750 @,@ 000 . The following year , Braathens SAFE started the first trial flights to South America . The first flight was made on 23 August from Stavanger via Reykjavík , Gander and Bermuda to Caracas , where the plane landed on 26 August . In October , the airline flew to Panama , but neither route gave sufficient contracts to commence regular services . In 1948 , the airline made fifty trips to Hong Kong , eight to Johannesburg , two to the United States , three to Venezuela and two to Panama .

= = Concession = =

During World War II , the civil aviation planning was conducted by the Aviation Council . In 1945 , they started a limited number of flights that were operated by the Royal Norwegian Air Force . On 2 July 1946 , the Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communications , several large shipping companies and other private investors reestablished Det Norske Luftfartselskap (DNL) , with the state owning 20 % and the shipping companies 49 % . This airline was granted a 20 @-@ year monopoly on domestic and international flights . According to the concession , only routes that DNL were not willing to fly themselves , could be granted to other airlines .

By 1948 , Braathens SAFE 's routes were so regular that several countries stated that a bilateral agreement would have to be negotiated for them to continue . However , the concession that had been granted to DNL did not allow Braathens to fly any scheduled flights . Braathens SAFE applied for fifteen @-@ year concession on 5 February 1948 ; Minister of Transport Nils Langhelle from the Labor Party knew that he would be violating DNL 's concession by granting Braathens SAFE a concession , but at the same time he was worried that Braathens SAFE could easily flag out to another country , from which DNL would receive no protection . The exception in DNL 's concession could not be used , since DNL declared that they , through the Scandinavian cooperation Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) , were planning to start a route to the far east . The Directorate for Civil Aviation stated that it was unlikely that DNL / SAS would start such a route within a few years , and recommended Langhelle that Braathens SAFE be granted the route . Concession was granted by the Norwegian Parliament on 3 February 1949 , with a duration of five years . The airline had to follow the route Oslo or Stavanger ? Amsterdam ? Geneva ? Rome ? Cairo ? Basra ? Karachi ? Bombay ? Calcutta ? Bangkok ? Hong Kong . The concession was made conditional that Braathens SAFE built a technical base at Stavanger Airport , Sola .

The Hong Kong @-@ route was officially opened on 5 August 1949 . Braathens SAFE had then moved its operative base from Gardermoen to Oslo Airport , Fornebu . The company stationed technical employees in Rome , Karachi , Bangkok and Hong Kong , as well as having an agreement with KLM . The planes would stop each night and crew and passengers would stay at a hotel . Cabin crew had no training , and learned the job as they worked . Chicken was the most common lunch meal , and the cabin crew had to purchase this fresh each day , usually observing the slaughter to ensure its freshness . In 1949 , sixty @-@ seven flights were made to Hong Kong , as well as two to Tokyo , to Venezuela and one to Johannesburg .

In 1950 , it became increasingly clear that the SAS @-@ cooperation was weak , and that either a full merger or a discontinuation of the cooperation would be necessary . Braathen suggested to the

government that DNL , Fred . Olsen Airtransport and Braathens SAFE should merge to create a new domestic airline , but this proposal was rejected by both DNL and Fred . Olsen . In 1949 , the Swedish branch of SAS , Aerotransport (ABA) , and the Danish branch , Det Danske Luftfartselskab (DDL) started a joint route to the Far East . For a merger to be completed , Danish and Swedish authorities required that SAS be granted all international routes from Norway , meaning that Braathens SAFE would lose its concession from 1 March 1954 . The SAS merger was completed on 8 August 1951 .

Braathens SAFE applied for a concession on a route from Norway to New York on 27 March 1950 . This would allow the airline to connect the route to the Hong Kong @-@ flights , giving one continual service . The proposal would involve the purchase of Douglas DC @-@ 6B or Lockheed L @-@ 1049 Super Constellation aircraft . The proposal was rejected by the government on 19 April . The following year , Braathens SAFE applied to extend the route to Tokyo , but this was also rejected by the government . In 1951 , the company applied to purchase two Super Constellations to replace two sold DC @-@ 4s , which was granted , and on 14 January 1953 for an extension of the concession for another ten years . On 13 November 1953 , the government rejected the concession application , stating that Norway was bound to grant the concession to SAS on the basis of the merger agreement .

= = = Icelandic cooperation = = =

In 1952 , the Icelandic airline Loftleidir was granted the concession to fly from Keflavík Airport outside Reykjavík to New York and Chicago in the United States , and to Oslo , Copenhagen and London . The company established a hub at Keflavík . Braathens SAFE and Loftleidir made an agreement where Braathens SAFE would lease personnel and mechanical services to Loftleidir , and the two would split profits from the joint venture evenly . This allowed the two airlines to have a continual route between Hong Kong and New York as long as Braathens SAFE 's concession lasted . In 1954 , another DC @-@ 4 , LN @-@ HHK , was bought . This aircraft was sold to Loftleidir the following year . In 1956 , another DC @-@ 4 , LN @-@ SUP , was bought , and used for charter and by Loftleidir . In 1959 and 1960 , Loftleidir received two new Douglas DC @-@ 6B aircraft , with a five @-@ year mechanical agreement with Braathens SAFE . In 1960 , the two companies agreed to terminate the cooperation from 1 January 1961 .

= = Domestic with Herons = =

From 1950 , Braathens SAFE started flying charter services to Europe with Douglas DC @-@ 6 , mainly to Copenhagen and Paris . DNL protested because Braathens SAFE was charging too low ticket prices , while DDL protested against the flights to Copenhagen . In September 1951 , Braathens SAFE offered Danish authorities to fly all domestic routes without subsidies , but this was rejected because such a permit could only be issued to Danish airlines . After World War II , only Fornebu , Stavanger Airport , Sola and Kristiansand Airport , Kjevik were in use as land airport . A plan for construction was passed by parliament in 1952 , that based the financing of airports as joint civilian and military airports , with funding from NATO .

In 1951 , Braathens SAFE applied for concession for a route from Oslo to Bodø via Trondheim without subsidies . They also stated that they were willing to fly all domestic routes without subsidies , granted that they were awarded all routes . This was based on the acquisition of de Havilland Heron aircraft , which could use shorter runways and has a capacity of 15 people . SAS was granted the concession to Bodø and Trondheim , but the Ministry of Transport issued a concession to Braathens SAFE on the route from Oslo via Tønsberg Airport , Jarlsberg to Stavanger . The plane started in Stavanger in the morning , and operated the opposite direction of SAS ' route from Oslo to Stavanger , which continued onwards to London . The first flight was made on 3 May 1952 , with the Heron LN @-@ PSG Per . From 7 to 14 May , the plane went on a tour of the country , visiting several airports . Regular services started on 18 August and a one @-@ way ticket cost NOK 95 .

On 30 January 1953 , Braathens SAFE applied to start a route from Oslo to Trondheim Airport ,

Lade . A trial permit was granted , and the first flight was made on 18 August . Because Lade had a grass runway , Trondheim Airport , Værnes was used during bad weather . SAS flew a morning flight from Oslo , while Braathens flew the morning route from Trondheim . In 1953 , Braathens SAFE stated that to keep their 210 employees and fleet of one DC @-@ 4 , one DC @-@ 3 and two Herons , they would have to receive future domestic services , to compensate for more than 90 % of their revenue disappearing with the loss of the Far East route . In 1953 , Braathens SAFE applied to fly five routes : Bardufoss ? Alta ? Kirkenes ; Stavanger ? Bergen ? Trondheim (both with Herons) ; Tromsø ? Alta ? Hammerfest ; Bodø ? Harstad ; and Bodø ? Harstad ? Tromsø (all with de Havilland Canada DHC @-@ 3 Otters) . The five routes would require NOK 725 @,@ 000 in annual subsidies . The concessions were granted to DNL , who allowed their partially owned subsidiary Widerøe to fly the sea routes .

Braathens bought six Herons , in addition to one that was leased during 1954 . They had been given the common Norwegian names Per , Ola , Pål and Lars . Because of replacements , the airline never operated more than four at a time . In June 1955 , Braathens SAFE started landing some of the Oslo ? Stavanger planes at Kristiansand Airport , Kjevik and Farsund Airport , Lista . The route , nicknamed the " Milk Route " , operated Stavanger ? Farsund ? Kristiansand ? Tønsberg ? Oslo in the morning , with a return in the evening . The same year , SAS and Braathens SAFE started negotiating splitting up the domestic routes . Nils Langhelle , then regional director in SAS , suggested creating a merged subsidiary that could fly all domestic routes . On 16 May 1956 , Braathens SAFE started landing at Hamar Airport , Stafsberg on the Oslo ? Trondheim route , and at Notodden Airport , Tuven on the Oslo ? Stavanger route . Both airports had 1 @,@ 000 metres (3 @,@ 300 ft) runways that could only be served by small aircraft such as the Heron . From 1959 , services to both airports were terminated . Røros Airport was opened on 19 July 1957 , and Braathens SAFE landed some of the Oslo ? Trondheim services there . After 1958 , services were terminated , but after the runway was extended from 1 @,@ 360 to 1 @,@ 600 metres (4 @,@ 460 to 5 @,@ 250 ft) , it was taken into use again in 1963 .

The route Stavanger ? Bergen ? Trondheim was awarded to Vestlandske Luftfartsselskap in 1956 , but this company filed for bankruptcy the following year . Ålesund Airport , Vigra was scheduled to open in 1958 , and both Braathens SAFE and SAS applied for the concession , along with the route along the West Coast . At first the ministry wanted to issue the concession on the route Stavanger ? Bergen ? Ålesund ? Trondheim to Braathens SAFE and the route Ålesund ? Oslo to SAS . But after negotiations , Braathens SAFE stated they were willing to fly the coastal route without subsidies if they were granted the Oslo @-@ route , since that would allow them to cross @-@ subsidize ; this was granted by the ministry . An agreement was then made between the ministry , SAS and Braathens SAFE , where both airlines would fly the routes Oslo ? Trondheim , Oslo ? Stavanger , Oslo ? Kristiansand and Kristiansand ? Stavanger ? Bergen ; Braathens SAFE had a monopoly on the routes Oslo ? Ålesund and Bergen ? Ålesund ? Trondheim , while SAS was granted a monopoly on the routes Oslo ? Bergen and (Oslo) ? Trondheim ? Bodø ? Bardufoss . In 1958 , Braathens SAFE had 77 @,@ 591 passengers .

= = = Hummelfjell Accident = = =

On 7 November 1956 , the Heron LN @-@ SUR Lars crashed at Hummelfjell after the aircraft had experienced icing problems . The Hummelfjell Accident killed the pilot and one passenger , but the remaining ten people on board survived . Among them was the famous television actor Rolf Kirkvaag , who , despite injury , succeeded at walking to civilization to inform about the accident .

= = Friendship = =

During the late 1950s , Braathens SAFE started looking for a replacement for the aging DC @-@ 3s and Herons . An order was placed with Fokker for the delivery of their new Fokker F @-@ 27 Friendship , a two @-@ engine turboprop with cabin pressurization . Braathens SAFE was the second airline to receive the plane , after Aer Lingus . The first craft , LN @-@ SUN , was delivered

in December 1958 , with the second , LN @-@ SUO , delivered the following year . They were put into service on the main routes : once daily Oslo ? Trondheim , once daily Oslo ? Ålesund , twice daily Oslo ? Stavanger , including one stopping at Kristiansand , and one trip daily Bergen ? Ålesund ? Trondheim . The delivery of the Friendships made the Herons unnecessary , and these were sold . The two DC @-@ 3s were kept as a reserve , and were used for the first part of the summer schedules because of late delivery of LN @-@ SUO . They were also used for charter . The airports at Hamar , Farsund and Tønsberg had too short runways for the Friendship , and these destinations were terminated .

The first flight to the winter @-@ only airport at Longyearbyen on Svalbard was made on 2 April 1959 , when Store Norske Spitsbergen Kulkompani chartered a DC @-@ 4 from Bardufoss Airport . Store Norske cleared a 1 @, @ 800 by 40 metres (5 @, @ 910 by 130 ft) runway on snow for the aircraft . More flights were chartered during the 1960s , and Longyearbyen became a regular charter destination for Braathens SAFE .

From 3 June to 30 September 1960 , Braathens SAFE was granted concession on the route from Oslo via Sandefjord Airport , Torp to Aalborg Airport in Denmark . This became possible because SAS had abandoned the route the previous year . It was flown with a DC @-@ 3 , giving an 80 % load factor . On 22 July , the Braathens SAFE applied for a three @-@ year concession , but this was rejected because SAS stated that they would restart the route . In 1961 , SAS started the route Stavanger ? Kristiansand ? Ålborg , and in 1963 on the route Oslo ? Kristiansand ? Ålborg . The concession allowed SAS to also take passengers on the domestic legs , giving Braathens SAFE competition on the routes to Kristiansand .

Passengers traveling from Western to Northern Norway had to transfer from Braathens SAFE to SAS in Trondheim . Both airlines saw this as a strategic opportunity to get routes in each other 's territories . On 31 August 1960 , Braathens SAFE applied for an extension of its Bergen ? Ålesund ? Trondheim route onwards to Bodø Airport and Bardufoss Airport . The two airports had been served by SAS from Oslo via Trondheim . SAS presented estimates that between 2 @. @ 5 and 6 @. @ 1 passengers transferred at Trondheim each day . Braathens SAFE later proposed that they could fly directly from Bergen and Ålesund to Bodø and Bardufoss , but Braathens SAFE 's application was rejected by the ministry . All concessions ended on 31 March 1961 , and the ministry extended them all one year . Three new airports , Alta Airport , Lakselv Airport , Banak and Kirkenes Airport , Høybuktnøen , were about to open and the ministry wanted to award new concessions that included these airports . Braathens SAFE applied to operate to all the airports in Northern Norway , but the contract was awarded to SAS . The latter also applied to operate a route from Northern Norway via Trondheim , Ålesund and Bergen to Stavanger , while Braathens SAFE in 1964 again applied for an extension of the West Coast route to Northern Norway . This was moderated to a direct route from Tromsø Airport to Bergen , which SAS received permission for on 4 March 1965 .

An additional F @-@ 27s was delivered in 1961 , and two more in 1962 . By then , the Oslo ? Stavanger route was expanded to four daily round trips , of which two went via Kristiansand . Ålesund had two round trips , while Trondheim had one . The coastal route had two services , and was branded as the " Airbus " . In all , 175 @, @ 202 passengers were transported , up 40 % since the previous year . By 1965 , the Trondheim , Ålesund and coast routes had three round trips , while there were four to Kristiansand and five to Stavanger . That year , the right @-@ winged Borten 's Cabinet was appointed ; Braathens SAFE therefore again applied for an extension of the West Coast route to Tromsø and Bodø . When the government signaled that it would support the application , it caused a major debate , particularly in Denmark and Sweden , and the Danish and Swedish governments threatened to terminate the SAS agreement . On 25 November 1966 , with 82 against 62 votes , the Norwegian Parliament voted to allow Braathens SAFE to fly to Bodø and Tromsø as an extension of the West Coast route from 1 April 1967 .

On 3 March 1967 , parliament decided to build four short take @-@ off and landing airports along the Helgeland coast between Trondheim and Bodø . Braathens placed an order for a de Havilland Canada DHC @-@ 6 Twin Otter and planned to start the company Braathens STOL . It applied to operate the route without subsidies , but the concession was rejected and granted with subsidies to Widerøe , which had been operating the routes using seaplanes .

= = Charter = =

During the 1950s , the main customers for charter flights had been Norwegian shipping companies , who flew their crew home from ports in Central Europe . In 1959 , Saga Tours was created as the first travel agency for Mediterranean charter trips , and the company started a cooperation with Braathens SAFE . The first DC @-@ 4 flew to Mallorca that year . In 1961 , the company 's first Douglas DC @-@ 6B was bought . It had a capacity of 96 passengers , and cooperation was also started with Metro and Paddan in Gothenburg . Other charter destinations were London , Alicante and Málaga , both in Spain . That year , Braathens SAFE bought 50 % of Saga Tours in a private placement . Braathens SAFE established an office in Gothenburg in 1965 . After Vingresor had been bought by SAS and moved to Stockholm three years later , three employees started Atlas Resor in Gothenburg , and started using Braathens SAFE as their airline . By 1966 , Braathens SAFE was operating seven DC @-@ 6s .

The agreements with Spanish authorities allowed only airlines from the country of origin or from Spain to fly charter flights . But because of the SAS @-@ cooperation , an agreement was made where any Scandinavian airline could fly to Spain from any of the three Scandinavian countries . Domestically , Braathens SAFE received strong competition from Sterling Airways , but on the other hand this allowed Braathens SAFE to fly charter flights from Sweden . In 1968 , the large Swedish ? Danish charter airline Internord went bankrupt , giving Braathens SAFE increased charter traffic . The company also started purchasing a larger share of Altas Resor , until it took over all the whole company in 1978 . In Sweden , Braathens SAFE used its partners to sell charter flights to Norway , and then continue their flights using scheduled flights . Braathens SAFE was hindered by the charter regulations from making intercontinental flights , as well as flights between the Scandinavian capitals . The rules also forced business travelers to use scheduled flights .

= = Into the Jet Age = =

In 1965 , Braathens SAFE placed an order for three Boeing 737 @-@ 200s , costing a total of NOK 100 million . They were intended to do the main haul of the charter market . There had been an internal struggle as to whether the company should purchase the Fokker F @-@ 28 Fellowship or the Boeing 737 @-@ 100 , a shorter version of the 737 @-@ 200 . Having a single plane type would give a single pool of pilot and mechanic certifications , and would have saved the company NOK millions in costs . Following the decision to purchase the F @-@ 28 , Bjørn G. Braathen , son of Ludvig G. and later CEO , left the company .

By 1966 , Braathens SAFE had sold all its DC @-@ 4s , and had purchased eight F @-@ 27s . The DC @-@ 6s were used exclusively for charter , with all domestic flights being flown with the F @-@ 27s . The same year , the booking system was centralized and moved to offices in Oslo . The company established sales offices in Bodø and Tromsø on 1 March 1967 . A new cargo department was opened at Oslo Airport on 29 September . Braathens SAFE applied in a joint venture with the Norwegian America Line to start a cargo flight to the United States and the Far East , but this was declined by the ministry . From 1967 , also DC @-@ 6s were used on domestic routes . In August , it was announced that Braathens SAFE would replace the F @-@ 27s with six new Fokker F @-@ 28 , and that the F @-@ 27s would be sold to the manufacturer . Later , the number of orders of 737s was reduced to two , and of F @-@ 28s to five . The Fellowships cost NOK 40 million each .

The first 737 , LN @-@ SUS , landed in Oslo on 8 January 1969 , followed by LN @-@ SUP on 31 January . Braathens SAFE was the launch customer of the F @-@ 28 , and the first plane landed in Oslo on 3 March . Five F @-@ 28s were delivered in the course of a year , in addition to one aircraft that was leased periodically until 1971 . There were several technical problems due to having the earliest models of the F @-@ 28 , causing some operational difficulties . Two DC @-@ 6s were sold , and all but three of the F @-@ 27s were sold to Fokker between October 1968 and May 1969 . Along with the aircraft came a new simulator , and the simulator division was moved from Sola to Fornebu . On 27 February 1970 , the company took into use an IT @-@ system , based at Sola .

With the delivery of the Boeing 737 @-@ 200s , Braathens SAFE started using these aircraft on the long @-@ haul charter flights . By 1977 , there were nine international charter airlines competing with Braathens SAFE : Aviaco , Britannia Airways , Dan @-@ Air , Linjeflyg , Maersk Air , Scanair (owned by SAS) , Spantax , Sterling and Transair . In 1976 , good exchange rates gave a peak of flights to London , with eleven weekly flights across the North Sea . Braathens SAFE also started flying for Vingresor . In 1976 , 44 % of the company 's revenue was from charter , but by 1979 it had dropped to 36 % . During this period , about half of the planes ' flying time was related to charter .

= = More airports = =

Prior to the opening of Kristiansund Airport , Kvernberget , Braathens SAFE applied for a concession to fly to it along the West Coast , as well as the direct route from Oslo . SAS applied to fly the Oslo @-@ service . The ministry wanted Braathens SAFE to fly the route with a concession granted to SAS , but Braathens SAFE rejected this . Instead , they were granted both the routes on temporary basis . The new airport received three daily flights to Oslo , of which two went via Ålesund , and four services on the West Coast route . At the same time , there was a discussion about who was to operate the new STOL @-@ airports on the West Coast . Braathens SAFE stated that they wanted a local airline to do the flying , and chose not to apply . The concession was granted to Widerøe , and Braathens SAFE subsequently bought part of the airline .

On 5 April 1972 , Molde Airport , Årø opened . Unlike other primary airports , it had been built and financed by the municipality , and did not become state @-@ owned until 1978 . Braathens SAFE started flying both to Oslo and along the West Coast from Molde . The same year , the airline for the first time exceeded one million domestic passengers . It also started with five weekly cargo flights with flowers from Genova , Italy . The following year , the last DC @-@ 6 was sold , after the type had been phased out since 1969 .

The same year , the government appointed a commission , led by Bue Fjermeros , to look into the organization of the domestic air routes . Since the last compromise in splitting routes , the traffic had increased more in Braathens SAFE 's domain than SAS ' . The commission also looked at to whom the two next airports that would be opened , Haugesund Airport , Karmøy and Harstad / Narvik Airport , Evenes , would be given . Neither company wanted to cooperate beyond the existing arrangement of coordinating their routes time @-@ wise , along with those of Widerøe . In addition , Braathens SAFE bought handling services from SAS at Gardermoen , Bergen , Bodø and Tromsø , while SAS bought handling services from Braathens SAFE at Stavanger . The commission granted SAS the rights to fly from Oslo to Haugesund , Harstad / Narvik and the new airport Svalbard Airport , Longyear . Braathens SAFE was allowed to fly from Bergen to Northern Norway via Ålesund , Molde and Kristiansund . SAS lost the right to fly directly from Bergen to Northern Norway . When the matter was passed by parliament , they also granted SAS the right to fly from Oslo to Stavanger , even if their planes did not continue abroad .

= = Flight 239 = =

On 23 December 1972 at 16 : 30 , the company 's most fatal accident occurred . F @-@ 28 LN @-@ SUY Sverre Sigurdson on Flight 239 from Ålesund to Oslo crashed at Asker , killing 40 of the 45 people on board , including the crew of three . The cause of the accident was never discovered , although a possibility could have been faults with the instrument landing system .

= = Times of change = =

Following the steep increase of oil prices in 1973 , Braathens SAFE increased the ticket prices with about 30 % , giving for the first year a reduction in the number of travelers . The IT @-@ system Bracar was introduced on 4 February 1974 , connecting all locations with 53 terminals , rationalizing 20 man @-@ years . In 1974 , Annæus Schjødt jr. became chair , and the following year , the employees were represented with two board members . The remaining three F @-@ 27s were sold

to the Braathens Rederi @-@ owned Busy Bee between 1975 and 1977 . From 1 January 1976 , Braathens SAFE introduced " Green Routes " , where passengers were granted 35 % discount if they traveled on Saturdays or Sunday morning , booked a round trip and were away for at least a full week or over a weekend . From 1972 to 1976 , the company 's revenue doubled , to NOK 500 million , while production increased 18 % . The main contributing factor was the increase of labor costs , that had almost doubled in the four years , although also higher fuel prices and taxes contributed . In 1976 , the airline transported 1 @,@ 154 @,@ 000 scheduled and 485 @,@ 000 chartered passengers . Braathens SAFE had a 37 % scheduled market share and 31 % share of the charter flights . The largest traffic increases were in Stavanger , Bergen and Trondheim . During the late 1970s , Braathens SAFE increased the number of direct flights between these cities , without increasing the number of landings in Ålesund and Kristiansand . From 1 April 1977 , the airline lost its dispensation to operate with reduced cabin crew , and was forced to increase the number on the F @-@ 28 from one to two , and on the 737 from two to three . At the same time , the airline introduced in @-@ flight meals .

Ludvig G. Braathen died on 27 December 1976 while he was still CEO . He was succeeded by his son Bjørn G. Braathen , who had returned to the company a few years earlier . In 1977 , Braathens SAFE made NOK 10 million in profit on the Trondheim route and NOK 4 million on the routes from Oslo to Kristiansand and Stavanger . At the same time , the airline lost NOK 6 million on the routes to from Oslo to Ålesund , Molde and Kristiansund , and NOK 18 million on the coastal routes between Stavanger and Tromsø . From 1 October 1978 , the company also introduced 50 % youth discount for people under 26 years . From 1 May 1978 , there was introduced a NOK 100 tax on international charter flights . The same year , Braathens SAFE bought 15 % of Bergenske Dampskibsselskab , that owned 51 % of the travel agency Bennett Reisebureau . This was to try to secure influence over the chain , that was also owned 31 % by SAS . A new , neutral ticketing system , SMART , was introduced in 1980 for all travel agents in Norway and Sweden . Following this , Braathens SAFE sold its stake in Bergenske with a profit .

Starting with the delivery of the F @-@ 28s and 737s , all planes were named after Norwegian kings . The last three F @-@ 27s were also given such names . During the 1970s , Braathens SAFE took delivery of eleven 737s , supplementing the four F @-@ 28s . The third delivered , LN @-@ SUA , had a cargo door on the side , making it ideal for cargo flights . The three planes delivered in 1979 had extended range tanks making direct flights to the Canary Islands possible . In 1979 , the company started looking into possible replacements for their fleet , considering larger aircraft .

The late 1970s and early 1980s was a time of economic problems for airlines worldwide . Passenger numbers stabilized , and Braathens SAFE introduced a 15 % discount to purchasers of 100 tickets at one time . The company hit NOK 1 billion in revenue in 1981 . Discounted tickets were not sufficient to cover the increasing costs , particularly related to fuel , and the company introduced the internal campaign Bra @-@ 82 . This involved a more market @-@ oriented management and a focus on service increase , including better regularity and free coffee . During the summer , the reduced demand made the airline introduce discounted " summer tickets " for NOK 280 on any route in Southern Norway . This gave a 75 % load factor , the highest for the whole year .

In 1982 , Braathens SAFE bought 15 % of DNL . It also applied , though the sister company Braathens Helikopter , for concessions for helicopter services from Stavanger to offshore oil platforms . As a reaction , the incumbent , Helikopter Service , applied for Braathens SAFE's West Coast routes . At this point , SAS bought 15 % of Helikopter Service . In 1984 , Braathens SAFE introduced services to Farsund Airport , using wet leased F @-@ 27s from Busy Bee . The same arrangement was used to connect Haugesund to Bergen and Stavanger . In Haugesund , this was in competition with Norving . Busy Bee @-@ operated planes were also used on routes from Sandefjord in competition with Norsk Flytjeneste . The same year , the cabin crew had a 14 @-@ day strike , halting all flights . It was caused by the company paying lower wages than SAS and Busy Bee . In 1985 , a new booking system was introduced , that allowed overbooking . This gave increased revenue , but the company had to start compensating rejected passengers with a full refund and a free seat on the next flight . On 16 December 1985 , the airline 's administration moved into the a new building , the Diamond , located at Fornebu . The frequent flyer program Bracard was

launched in September 1985 . It was a cooperation with Inter Nor Hotels , and gave special privileges to travelers that made 25 full @-@ price trips per year with Braathens .

= = New Boeings = =

In 1980 , the management of Braathens SAFE decided that it needed larger aircraft if the company was to stay competitive on charter flights . Larger aircraft could be put into service on the main services from Oslo , Gothenburg and Stockholm , while the 737s could be used to smaller destination and from other cities . On 25 February 1980 , the company announced that it had ordered two Boeing 767 @-@ 200 planes , with an option for two addition craft . The cost of the two firm orders was about NOK 500 million . This would allow the aircraft to be used for both domestic scheduled flights and for charter , and was configured with 242 seats . This was less than charter @-@ only airlines , for instance Britannia had their planes configured with 273 seats . Braathens SAFE 's planes were delivered on 23 March and in November 1984 . The following year showed increasing charter traffic , although it only made up 25 % of the company 's revenue . The company had considered the smaller Boeing 757 , but did not have sufficient range . Also the Airbus A310 was close to being chosen .

The 767s were launched as " First Business Class " to charter travelers , but the business model was not successful . The new consumer groups entering the market had low willingness to pay , and the demand for premium charter services was low . The company was faced with not being able to charter out the plane because of the low seat numbers , but could not put in the extra seats because of the aircraft also being used on the scheduled market . Using so large aircraft on the short @-@ haul flights in Southern Norway gave little economy @-@ of @-@ scale , and the airline seldom needed the increased capacity . Braathens SAFE also had problems , because from order to delivery , the exchange rates had increased from 5 to 9 NOK per USD , almost doubling the price in NOK . In 1986 , the two 767s where sold . Two years later , Atlas Resor was sold , and the following year Saga . Braathens SAFE closed its bases in Gothenburg and Stockholm , but remained a charter operator with 737s from Norway .

Following the decision to sell the two 767s , management also decided to sell the four remaining F @-@ 28s . This would allow Braathens to operate a fleet of pure 737 @-@ 200 , giving lower operating costs . One 737 was taken out of service in 1984 , and the four F @-@ 28s sold in 1986 . The same year , seven more 737 @-@ 200s were delivered , along with two more in 1987 and 1988 . By then , Braathens SAFEs entire fleet consisted of nineteen 737 @-@ 200s . At the same time , Boeing had launched the 737 @-@ 300 , a slightly larger aircraft with new CFM @-@ 56 engines . Braathens SAFE considered the new aircraft , but where concerned that it used a traditional mechanical cockpit . The airline also needed larger aircraft for the charter traffic , and smaller aircraft for the domestic routes . The airline also considered the McDonnell Douglas MD @-@ 80 and the Airbus A320 , but settled on the 737 following the announcement of the stretched 737 @-@ 400 , with 156 seats , and the shortened 737 @-@ 500 , with 124 seats . These had glass cockpits , and Braathens SAFE would be among the first airlines to receive both models . To finance the purchase , the airline sold all but two of the 737 @-@ 200s and leased them back . For some of the aircraft , they received more money than they had paid .

= = = Hijacking = = =

On 21 June 1985 , the 737 @-@ 200 LN @-@ SUG Harald Gille , with 121 passengers en route from Trondheim to Oslo , was hijacked by the 24 @-@ year @-@ old Stein Arvid Huseby . He had threatened a flight attendant with an air gun . He demanded to talk to Prime Minister Kåre Willoch and Minister of Justice Mona Røkke and a press conference to make a political statement . His demands were not met , and he surrendered while the plane was parked in Oslo . This was the first hijacking in Norway .

= = Competition and new planes = =

The F @-@ 28s had the largest regularity problems , mostly due to the number of landings , which could count up to 16 per day . For instance , LN @-@ SUO flew 36 @,@ 000 hours with 76 @,@ 000 landings . The last flight was made on 16 December 1986 , and the aircraft sold for NOK 45 million each . Although the F @-@ 28 was taken out of service , some of the routes on the West Coast needed to be operated with smaller aircraft than the 737 . The company made an agreement to wet lease Busy Bee F @-@ 27s on some of the routes , while the most trafficked ones would be taken over by 737s .

A 1985 government committee , led by State Secretary Per Arne Watle , recommended that more route be flown by both Braathens SAFE and SAS , and that additional airlines be allowed to start other routes . On 5 September 1985 , Braathens SAFE applied for the route Trondheim ? Bodø ? Harstad / Narvik ? Tromsø and Tromsø ? Longyearbyen . SAS had stated that it was fine with them if other airlines started flying international routes they did not , and on 17 October Braathens SAFE also applied for the routes Bergen ? Stavanger ? Paris , Bergen ? Stavanger ? Manchester , Oslo ? Stavanger ? Brussels and Trondheim ? Bergen ? Newcastle . The applications were rejected and it was agreed upon that SAS would retain all rights to fly internationally between Oslo , Bergen , Stavanger , Gothenburg , Stockholm , Copenhagen and Århus .

A new round of concession applications were filed in 1987 : Trondheim to Northern Norway , Tromsø ? Longyearbyen , Oslo ? Billund and Oslo ? Alicante . The right @-@ winged Willoch 's Second Cabinet decided to use three principles in issuing new concessions : keeping the array of local routes , granting concessions on the terms that the airlines would continue to cross @-@ subsidize routes , and to introduce competition on the largest routes . Braathens SAFE was given permission to fly Oslo ? Bergen and Western Norway ? Trondheim ? Bodø ? Tromsø , plus once daily Oslo ? Trondheim ? Bodø , as well as Tromsø ? Longyearbyen . At the same time , SAS was allowed to fly freely on the routes Oslo ? Trondheim and Oslo ? Stavanger . In 1988 , Braathens SAFE introduced automatic check @-@ in machines in Oslo , Stavanger , Bergen , Ålesund and Trondheim .

The first 737 @-@ 400 , LN @-@ BRA , was delivered to the airline on 9 July 1989 . The 19 737 @-@ 200s were gradually handed to their owners , while seven 737 @-@ 400s and seventeen 737 @-@ 500s were delivered until 1994 . The investment cost NOK 4 @.@ 5 billion . By the end of 1993 , the company had NOK 3 @.@ 4 billion in debt . On 1 June 1989 , Erik G. Braathen , son of Bjørn G. , took over as CEO at the age of 34 . In 1992 , Busy Bee filed for bankruptcy ; the company 's fleet of three Fokker 50s were transferred to the newly established Norwegian Air Shuttle , which started wet @-@ leased operations along the West Coast for Braathens SAFE . As demand increased through the 1990s , the fleet was extended to six aircraft .

= = International routes = =

Braathens SAFE was also given the right to fly its first international scheduled flights for the first time in several decades . On 19 August 1988 , the airline was granted concession to fly to Billund in Denmark . At the same time , Air @-@ X was granted concession to fly the route via Sandefjord and Skien . The route started on 2 May 1989 . Previously the rules stated that if SAS flew to a non @-@ Scandinavian destination from any capital , no other Scandinavian airlines could fly to that city . Braathens SAFE lost many contracts in the charter market in 1990 , following Scanair 's purchase of larger Douglas DC @-@ 10 aircraft . On 18 May 1990 , Braathens SAFE was awarded the concession a route from Oslo , Bergen and Stavanger to Newcastle , which opened on 3 April 1991 . The airline was also awarded the route from Tromsø to Murmansk , Russia , once per week from 28 January 1993 .

On 19 June 1990 , SAS announced that all its services to London Gatwick Airport would be moved to London Heathrow Airport , where most of its services had landed . The same day , the Ministry of Transport announced that any Scandinavian airline could apply for and receive concessions to fly to Gatwick . On 25 June , Braathens SAFE applied to fly to London , but instead wanted to fly to London Stansted Airport , to have better landing slots . The concession was granted on 18 January

1991 , but the airline chose to not start the route . The company had been granted a concession to Malmö in Sweden , and the route opened on 2 May 1991 with two daily departures . This was later reduced to one . In October 1992 , the two airlines that flew from Oslo to Gatwick , Norway Airlines and Dan @-@ Air , filed for bankruptcy . Braathens SAFE immediately decided to start the route , with a departure at about 10 : 30 that would allow connections to the rest of the domestic network . Six days later , the first schedules were published in the newspaper , slots and British permission was granted three days after that . Another two days after that , the service started .

At the time , Denmark was a member of the European Union (EU) , while Sweden and Norway had applied and were awaiting referenda to determine membership . EU was working to deregulate the airline market from 1995 , which could cause problems for the Scandinavian agreements . In preparation for this , Braathens SAFE started negotiations with Linjeflyg of Sweden and Maersk Air of Denmark to create an alliance to compete with SAS . In particular , the three airlines wanted to capture the two million passengers that travelled between the three Scandinavian capitals : Oslo , Copenhagen and Stockholm . Instead , SAS was given permission to purchase Linjeflyg in exchange for the Swedish airline market being deregulated from 1 July 1992 . From 23 October 1992 , the Norwegian Armed Forces stopped chartering aircraft and started using scheduled flights to fly 240 @,@ 000 personnel annually . Since most of the transport was between Northern and Southern Norway , this gave reduced revenue for Braathens SAFE .

= = Helicopters = =

On 1 September 1989 , Ludvig G. Braathens Rederi founded Braathens Helikopter . The shipping company had signed an agreement with the oil companies Norsk Hydro , Phillips Petroleum and Statoil to provide helicopter transport for their crews to their offshore oil installations Ekofisk , Oseberg , Gullfaks , Veslefrikk . This was the first time the incumbent Helikopter Service had received competition on their offshore helicopter services . The initial agreement secured Braathens Helikopter a revenue of NOK 800 million in the course of five years , and gave the company a 20 % market share . Four 19 @-@ seet Aérospatiale Super Puma helicopters were ordered , each costing NOK 60 million . Total investment costs were NOK 300 million . Two helicopters were stationed at Stavanger Airport , Sola and two at Bergen Airport , Flesland . The initial contract involved flying 10 @,@ 000 passengers per year .

Twenty @-@ two pilots were hired along with a total staff of 70 , and services started on 1 September 1990 . In June 1991 , Braathens Helikopter signed a three @-@ year agreement with Amoco for flights from Stavanger to Valhall . The contract had an option for a two @-@ year extension . The revenue was between NOK 100 and 200 million , depending on the length of the contract and the capacity needed . Operations started in February 1992 , and involved the company purchasing another two Super Pumas . On 10 September , Braathens Helikopter was awarded the contract with British Petroleum for flights from Stavanger to Ula and Gyda . The contract gave a revenue of up to NOK 300 million in the course five years . Operations started on 1 November 1992 , and involved about 2 @,@ 000 hours of flying per year . With this contract , Braathens Helikopter had about a 30 % market share . Braathens purchased one more Super Puma as a consequence of the contract . After operations started , the company had grown to 120 employees and was the second @-@ largest helicopter operator in the country .

Braathens Helikopter and Helikopter Service announced on 1 October 1993 that the two companies would merge from 1 January 1994 . Ludvig G. Braathens Rederi would be paid with NOK 225 million in Helikopter Service shares . The Norwegian Competition Authority stated they would have to look at the merger , since the new company would have an almost @-@ monopoly on offshore flights . However , the ministry stated that the authority could not hinder the merger , because by the time new contracts were awarded in 1995 , helicopter operators from foreign countries would also be allowed to bid . The ownership of Braathens Helikopter was transferred to Helikopter Service on 14 December . Ludvig G. Braathens Rederi received 14 % of the shares in the merged company . They were immediately sold , giving Ludvig G. Braathens Rederi a NOK 170 million profit on the five @-@ year venture .

