



The Voice of UK Airlines

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BATA CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO COMMIT TO A ROBUST AVIATION POLICY TO SUPPORT AND GROW INTERNATIONAL AIR CONNECTIVITY

Marking the deadline on Friday 19th July for the submission to the Airports Commission of long term proposals for developing capacity, the British Air Transport Association (BATA), representing UK registered airlines, has issued the following statement:

The UK is a collection of islands off the coast of North West Europe with only one fixed land based connection to the continent. The role of aviation in maintaining the UK's connectivity has to be seen in this context.

BATA firmly believes that both hub capacity and non-hub capacity should be increased where and as required. Increasing the UK's capacity beyond its current constraints is essential to maintain the UK's competitive position thus creating new business opportunities and jobs throughout the country.

As the UK's only existing hub has effectively been at capacity for over a decade, expansion would allow UK airlines and airports to serve the customer demand that has either been lost to foreign airlines and airports or suppressed by the UK's capacity constraints. The UK economy would derive significant and lasting benefits in the form of inward investment and jobs from improved connectivity with new markets around the world.

However, it is crucial that any new airport capacity is both affordable and located where airlines and passengers will use it. Unaffordable or poorly located capacity will not be used and risks being a 'white elephant'.

Commenting, Simon Buck, Chief Executive of BATA said:

“To ensure there is no further erosion of the UK’s competitive position, the Government must set a clear commitment to a new and robust national aviation policy that truly maintains the UK’s status as an international hub for aviation and also permits growth in non-hub airport capacity when and where demand requires.”

“There are significant risks associated with an increasing reliance on overseas hub airports to provide connectivity for the UK. Relying on overseas airports will lead to a degradation of UK connectivity while existing UK hub capacity slowly withers. As a country we would be handing over a strategic national asset and resource to foreign interests and would no longer be in charge of our own destiny. This would have serious implications for the future security of the UK’s global connectivity.”

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

- BATA is the trade body for UK-registered airlines, with members representing all sectors of the industry.
- In 2012, BATA members employed 73,000 people, operated four-fifths of the UK commercial aircraft fleet and were responsible for some 96% of UK airline output, carrying 131 million passengers and 1.1 million tonnes of cargo.
- The eleven BATA member airlines are: British Airways, DHL, easyJet, Flybe, Jet2.com, Monarch, RVL Group, Thomas Cook, Thomson Airways, Titan Airways and Virgin Atlantic.