Historic Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement between the State of Qatar and the European Union

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BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY

Significant competitive advantages now provided to air carriers of both parties

Based on the strategic vision of the State of Qatar and following the mandate from the European Union (EU) Member States to the European Commission granted in June 2016, the State of Qatar and the EU engaged immediately in September 2016 and have successfully concluded the negotiation of a Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement on 06 February 2019, within the given EU Sunset Clause deadline.

This landmark Agreement is the first of its kind ever concluded between the EU and a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Member State, providing a significant competitive edge to air carriers of both parties and a sustainable framework for future operations. As a result, all air carriers from the 28 EU Member States and Qatar now have unlimited and unrestricted access to their respective territories.

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QATAR IS THE FIRST COUNTRY TO CONCLUDE NEGOTIATIONS AFTER EU ADOPTED ITS AVIATION STRATEGY

In June 2016, the EC received a mandate from the EU Member States to negotiate Comprehensive Air Transport Agreements with several States, including the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Turkey and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc.

We are very proud of the work that we have committed to during these negotiations. This Agreement will extend the benefits of liberalisation and re-energise the international aviation regime. We have kept our eyes focused on what matters most in the long-term: our common benefits, our partnership, and our friendship. Trust and good faith have been the main ingredients of this successful negotiation.

This Agreement will encourage other trading blocks and significant aviation markets to join us in achieving a liberalised global aviation regime for future generations. We believe that the summary of this agreement and our positive engagement will serve as a role model for others.
During negotiations, Qatar Airways GCEO, His Excellency Akbar Al Baker, personally attended numerous side meetings with high-level Commissioners and many Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). Foremost was an intervention with the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN Committee) — marking the first time a non-European CEO addressed the European Parliament — as well as later hosting an evening at the European Parliament attended by the European Commissioner for Mobility and Transport, and the Director General for Mobility and Transport, along with MEPs representing numerous EU Member States.

The State of Qatar and Qatar Airways are and remain committed to strong relationships with the European Union.
Through these negotiations, both sides have demonstrated that positive engagement can build trust among nations, so they can embrace the benefits of competition. Our hope is that the success of these negotiations will encourage other trading blocs and significant aviation markets to join in achieving a liberalised global aviation regime for future generations.

The agreement will offer a common platform for airlines in Europe and Qatar to understand each other better, creating new opportunities for collaboration and cooperation.”

His Excellency Mr Akbar Al Baker  I  Group Chief Executive, Qatar Airways

Abdulla Nasser Turki Al-Subaey  
President of the Civil Aviation Authority of the State of Qatar  
05 February 2019

Violeta Bulc  
European Commissioner for Transport  
05 February 2019

Henrik Hololei  
Department for mobility and transport (DG MOVE)  
05 February 2019
MODERNISATION OF EXISTING PORTFOLIO OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Conclusion of the EU-Qatar Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement brings a fresh approach to some of the articles, introduces new articles and takes into consideration the latest ICAO standards and global industry best practices.

Among the new articles introduced, we have taken the bold step towards satisfying the EU competition regulations in a revolutionary “Fair Competition Clause” (FCC), which creates a balanced framework for operations with fair and equal opportunities for air carriers of both sides to compete.

Based on the State of Qatar’s commitment derived from its membership in the International Labour Organization (ILO) and recognising the importance of labour conditions in the airline industry, a new “Social Aspects Clause” has been introduced in this Agreement.

In compliance with ICAO standards and recommended practices (SARPs), both sides reviewed and updated technical articles, such as “Aviation Safety”, “Aviation Security”, “Air Traffic Management” and “Environment”. The State of Qatar once again stressed the need to protect the environment by promoting the most sustainable development of aviation.
EUROPEAN AIRLINES WILL NO LONGER NEED GSA IN QATAR

No European carrier will be required to have a local General Sales Agent (GSA) as a condition for operations to Doha.

For the first time in history and unique for the GCC, no European carrier will be required to have a local General Sales Agent (GSA) as a condition for operations to Doha. Furthermore, the State of Qatar has committed to offer a fair and friendly business environment, including local sponsorship. As a result, European airlines will enjoy unrestricted commercial opportunities unlike ever before.
ENGAGING IN THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION, TRUST AND PARTNERSHIP

September 2016: 1st Round of Consultations (Doha)

June 2016: Mandate from the EU Member States to start negotiations with the State of Qatar for a Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement

April 2018: 4th Round of Consultations (Doha)

2015

December 2015: EU Comprehensive Strategy for the European Aviation Sector published proposing an ambitious external EU aviation policy.

2016

February/March 2017: 2nd Round of Consultations (Doha)

October 2017: 3rd Round of Consultations (Brussels)

2017

February 2019: Conclusion of negotiations [and initialling] of the Qatar-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement

January 2019: 5th Round of Consultations (Doha)

2018

June 2019: EU Sunset Clause deadline

2019

ENGAGING IN THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION, TRUST AND PARTNERSHIP

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