

News Release

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ETTSA ASKS COMMISSION TO CAREFULLY CONSIDER ALLIANCE IMPACT ON TRAVEL DISTRIBUTION

Brussels, 3 May 2010: ETTSA (European Technology & Travel Services Association) raised its concerns to the European Commission about the potential adverse consequences of the British Airways, American Airlines and Iberia alliance for consumers, in a response to a solicitation of comments from stakeholders. This consultation has now been closed and the Commission is considering the different comments.

“The airlines are trying to allay Commission concerns about implications of their alliance,” said ETTSA’s Secretary General Tom Parker. “They’ve offered commitments to address certain competition concerns – but we believe there are unaddressed issues that could threaten consumer choice and raise prices.”

ETTSA which encourages full transparency, fair competition and consumer choice in travel distribution. “We pointed out that consumers benefit from the broad choice provided by independent travel distribution. A hallmark is unbiased information and price transparency,” Parker continued. “Consumers would be harmed if airlines prevent neutral and non-discriminatory access to content, and we think that, without the proper safeguards, airlines members of an alliance may be in a stronger position to do so by restricting or denying content to independent travel distributors.

“If independent travel distributors are marginalised, then consumer transparency is decreased, along with competitive constraints on airline prices,” said Parker. “We ask the Commission to require British Airways, American and Iberia to commit not to apply unfair and/or discriminatory practices, that would restrict or limit the ability of independent travel distributors to access and offer the content of those members to the consumers, whether individuals or corporations.”

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ETTSA (the European Technology and Travel Services Association) was launched in 2009 to represent and promote the interests of travel distributors and Global Distribution Systems (GDS). Working with industry, policymakers, opinion formers, consumer groups and other relevant European stakeholders, the Brussels-based association encourages and supports fair competition and consumer choice in the travel distribution chain. Members include Amadeus, ebookers, Expedia, Opodo, Sabre (including its affiliate lastminute.com) and Travelport. Associate members include Booking.com and eDreams. www.etsa.eu