

Speaking Notes

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Joining Event, Brussels Airlines

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Check against delivery

Thank you, Michel, for the kind introduction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Already for the second time in 2009 I have the pleasure to take the podium on behalf of the Chief Executive Board of our Alliance and to formally signal to the world, that our family of airlines is growing.

A few weeks ago, in New York, we announced Continental as a member and now, here on the other side of the Atlantic, we are celebrating the membership of Brussels Airlines.

You have selected a historic location for an event, which by all means can be called historic for your airline and for Star Alliance.

Historic for Star Alliance, as today we find our home in the heart of Europe, in Brussels, the European capital.

While we have been serving Belgium from all of our European hub airports right from the beginning in 1997, it is only now, that we can start to develop Brussels as a hub airport by its own.

With Brussels Airlines in the center of the activities, we are convinced that the customers will be served better than ever before.

Our schedule now offers close to 1100 destination in every corner of the globe. More destinations and more countries, many of which in

Africa, strengthen Star Alliance in important and growing regions of the world.

Star Alliance passengers can now reach Bujumbura in Burundi, Conakry in Guinea or Kigali in Ruanda in the renown comfort of their favorite alliance.

They can earn and burn miles on our nearly 20.000 daily flights.

And they will experience the many alliance benefits such as premium customer handling, smooth connections and access to over 900 lounges worldwide.

No other alliance comes close to the variety of choice.

And when we say choice in Star Alliance, we mean it in so many ways.

- Choice not only in selecting flights from the vast schedule,
- Choice in the services we offer,
- Choice in the routes you can fly,
- Choice in the cultural flair you experience and even
- Choice in the price you pay.

Choice is, what the global customer wants. Choice is, what Star Alliance strives to deliver.

Today another prime selection is added to the Star Alliance menu of choice, Brussels Airlines.

Historic is the day for Brussels Airlines as well.

Brussels Airlines, a young name, a fresh design, an ambitious team of dedicated aviation professionals. This is how we learned to know you over the past month of integration.

But we also learned something, which lies much deeper, back in history. The roots of your aviation experience and dedication reach back more than 75 years. And the roots of your alliance experience reach back almost as long as Star Alliance is active.

No wonder, that the integration of the airline took only a few months to completion.

No wonder, that the experts were speaking the same language right from day one.

No wonder, that we never had the slightest doubt that this airline is fit for Star Alliance.

Belgium can be proud of its national airline, which has mastered its careful transition back into the top league of international aviation:

- Ready to convince its customers with quality service
- Ready to compete with the world's best airlines
- Ready to succeed in a rough market environment

Congratulations to all the 3000 employees of Brussels Airlines for a hard and burdensome job, well done!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Being in Brussels and not referring to the European Union would be a missed opportunity.

Because in so many ways we can see similarities between the development of this alliance of nations, which we call Europe and the first and most experienced alliance of airlines, our Star Alliance.

1. We are similar in number and character of members
2. We are similar in our aspiration
3. We are similar in strategy

The first similarity: Welcoming our 26th member today lets the Star Alliance member count come close to that of the European Union.

What is more important, is that - like the EU - we have had to go through a long process to understand, how we can manage and satisfy the requirements of so many diverse members, different in size, different in business goals and different in cultural background.

Second: Our aspiration seems to be the same:

- Become and stay fit for the global competition
- Enable likeminded partners to create value beyond their individual capabilities
- Do all this in a democratic constellation of trust, respect and mutual support

Please allow me to stress the competitive aspect. The member states of the European Union have well recognized that in the age of globalization it becomes close to impossible for individual countries to compete in global trade relations and global financial markets.

In no way is the situation different for airlines. We in Star Alliance have teamed up to cope with global economic realities, just like the member states of the European Union.

Ready to compete on global scale.

No individual airline today has the organizational or financial capabilities to realize a truly global offer for its passengers. Airline alliances have taken over the role of global competitors.

And I may add, all of them are taking their job quite seriously, which in turn is good for the passengers.

And thirdly: The strategies of the EU and of our alliance seem comparable.

Members should contribute to the overall success to the best of their abilities. Flexibility and adaptability are required to keep the family together.

In the end of a long process this common understanding led to a new European Governance, which the Heads of State have all the right reason to celebrate at their meeting here in Brussels. May the European way be one of success and of example for other parts of the world.

In fact, behind the scenes, our alliance went through a similar process. We as well had to adapt our way of working together to the growth of membership and to the changes of the market realities.

And we as well believe, that we have found a formula, that works for each of our members alike.

Ladies and Gentlemen

A historic day celebrated in an historic environment. Of the many wise decisions, which have been made in this room, today's decision shall turn into one of the most successful ones.

For the benefit of the customers of Brussels Airlines

For the benefit of its shareholders and

For the benefit of the employees of this formidable airline.

Michel and Bernard,

Over the past months many systems had to be integrated, many standards had to be met. Your team has managed the integration process with great enthusiasm and professionalism.

It is with pleasure and with pride that I hereby formally confirm that as of today Brussels Airlines has met all the requirements of membership in Star Alliance.

On behalf of the Chief Executive Board:

Brussels Airlines – welcome onboard