

In this edition:

Benefits and challenges of the comprehensive air transport agreement between the EU and the State of Qatar

Introduction by H.E. Akbar Al Baker, Group Chief Executive, Qatar Airways	2
Interview with Ms Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for Transport and Mobility	3
Interview with H.E. Mr. Abdullah bin Nasser Turki Al-Subaey, Chairman of Qatar Civil Aviation Authority.....	5
The Oryx View.....	6
ICAO Carbon reduction deal.....	7
Qatar Airways' continuous partnership with the EU	8





H.E. Mr. Akbar Al Baker, Group Chief Executive, Qatar Airways

Dear Reader,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to our first edition of the Oryx Review.

Qatar Airways is committed to an open and transparent dialogue with the European Union and we particularly welcome the initiative of the European Commission to negotiate a comprehensive air transport agreement.

The first round of the negotiations between Qatar and the European Union (EU) on a new comprehensive air transport agreement started on 19 September in Doha with the aim of seeking more mutually liberal access to each others' markets.

The start of these negotiations is a historic and unique opportunity that brings the State of Qatar and the EU closer. The State of Qatar has huge growth potential and Qatar Airways welcomes more competition from European airlines that would be able to benefit from a more liberalised market.

Qatar Airways, the national carrier of the State of Qatar, is committed to productive talks with the goal of liberalisation of the Qatar-EU markets and to reach agreement on the terms of progressive fair competition principles with the EU.

We are eager to discuss the terms of 'fair competition' proposed by the European Commission. We support fair competition in the true sense of the words – fair access to markets, competing for customers based on product, service and price, on a level playing field. Rules that apply to one airline should apply to all. I look forward to exchanging views on this subject.

The first round of the talks have set the stage for productive talks going forward, in our mutual desire to achieve a comprehensive air services agreement that brings our regions together. Throughout the next editions of our newsletter we aim to further enhance the open and constructive communication.

I hope you enjoy the first edition of our Oryx Review.

Yours sincerely,

Akbar Al Baker
Group Chief Executive, Qatar Airways



Interview with Ms Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for Transport and Mobility

QR: On the occasion of the launch of the negotiations of an EU-Qatar Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement we would like to know what are your aspirations regarding the outcome of these talks?

V.B.: Qatar is one of the most dynamic and fast growing aviation markets in the world, which is why the European Union would like to further enhance its aviation ties with Qatar. With this new agreement, our ambition is to go even further and upgrade our existing relationship to a true aviation partnership.

“Qatar is one of the most dynamic and fast growing aviation markets in the world, which is why the European Union would like to further enhance its aviation ties with Qatar.”

This will include enhanced market access to all 28 EU Member States, based on a modern regulatory framework as well as a close cooperation in all aviation areas: safety, air traffic management, security etc. The EU has already concluded comprehensive aviation agreements with the United States, Canada, a number of neighbouring countries, and is currently

finalising one with Brazil and Ukraine. All agreements have shown a significant rise in traffic. At the end of the day, more traffic means more growth and more jobs. So I believe that both Qatar and the EU will be able to benefit significantly from such an agreement.

QR: Qatar Airways welcomes competition from all over the world. We are happy that as a natural result of the Agreement, more and more European airlines – both scheduled and non-scheduled, passenger and cargo – will have the opportunity to operate to/ from Qatar. How do you envisage the market development stemming from this Agreement?

V.B.: Qatar already has access to the EU market through the bilateral agreements it has signed with EU Member States. But the EU-Qatar air transport agreement should improve market access to the entire market and at the same time sustain the competitiveness of the sector. The EU has been very successful in opening and integrating its internal market and there are important lessons we have learnt from this process which can be useful when enhancing



aviation relations with Qatar. Regarding details of how and when this could be done – I believe this should be left for the negotiators to agree and I am confident they will.

QR: Fair competition is one of the key cornerstones of the proposed draft Agreement. As our Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker also stated in his remarks during the first round of negotiations, the term “fair competition” is a very complex one. Could you please elaborate what does the European Commission mean by “fair competition”?

V.B.: As you know, there is no common understanding at international level – ICAO or WTO - of what “fair competition” is. I am nevertheless convinced that to be beneficial for all sides, the liberalisation and the elimination of barriers to market access

can only go hand in hand with common rules based on reciprocity. That would be my definition of “fair competition”. What the concept entails precisely depends on the specificities of each agreement. It will be for our negotiators to refine the concept.

QR: We would like to thank you for your valuable time for answering our questions. Would you have any closing remarks?

V.B.: I hope that we will be able to swiftly conclude our negotiations with Qatar, so that our citizens can benefit from more connections and better prices. Global connectivity is a driver of trade and tourism, and directly contributes to economic growth and job creation. This is truly a win-win situation.



The age of the industry in both blocks and challenges of the regulatory convergence



Interview with H.E. Mr. Abdullah bin Nasser Turki Al-Subaey, Chairman of Qatar Civil Aviation Authority

QR: His Excellency, we are pleased to welcome you in the first edition of our newsletter 'The Oryx Review'. Could you please share with us your impressions following the first round of negotiations between the EU and the State of Qatar.

“The ultimate goal of this comprehensive agreement is to achieve gradual opening of the remaining restricted markets.”

H.E.: The State of Qatar and the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority welcome the European Union's initiative to negotiate

and conclude a comprehensive air transport agreement between the State of Qatar and the European Union and its Member States. In my view, the ultimate goal of this comprehensive agreement is to agree on gradual opening of the market while paving the way for further liberalisation of the remaining restrictive markets.

QR: For the State of Qatar it is crucial and fundamental that the existing traffic rights negotiated by the State of Qatar with the Member States of the European Union bilaterally will not be negatively affected by the comprehensive agreement. The traffic rights granted in those agreements should form the basis of enhancement deriving from the comprehensive agreement.

Could you please further elaborate the expectations of the State of Qatar.

H.E.: Aviation is a young industry in the State of Qatar – and this extends to its oversight and regulations. In order to reach the full potential of the agreement, we need time to achieve the desired level of regulatory cooperation and convergence. This agreement is not about what it can offer right now but what it will mean for the future: the State of Qatar with its single airline and a single airport will be opening its doors to all scheduled, non-scheduled and cargo carriers of the 28 Member States of the European Union. It will be challenging to achieve and strike fair and equal opportunity in such an enhanced air transport market.

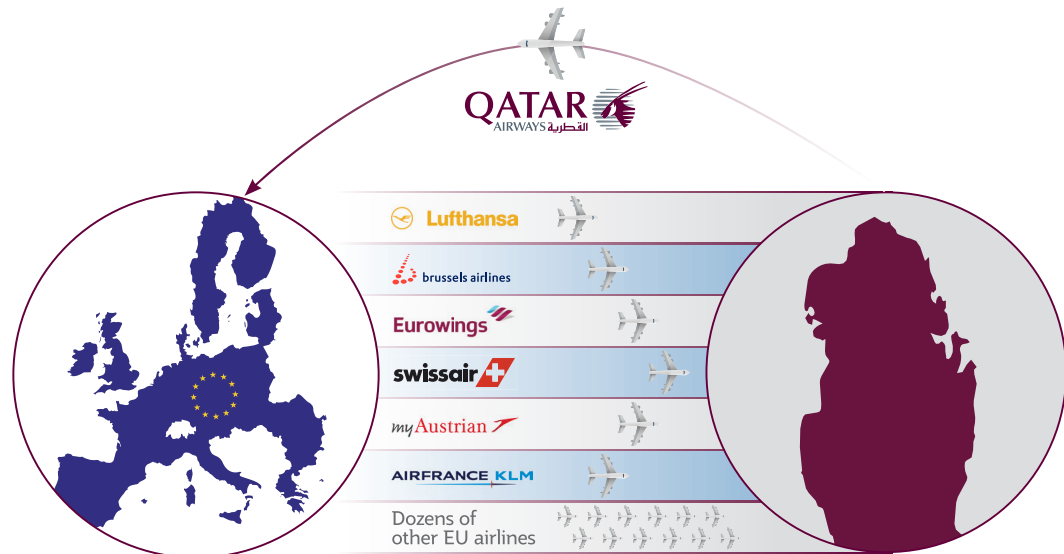
This agreement will improve the market conditions through open dialogue on the ways of doing business whilst aiming for regulatory convergence and mutual recognition of rules and measures. Such attempts for achieving convergence should take into consideration the perspective of the young nature of the industry in this country. I believe that we have achieved a solid progress during the first dialogue, which shows the commitment of the State of Qatar and this open and constructive collaboration will help us to conclude a mutually beneficial and historical agreement between the European Union and the State of Qatar.



The Oryx View

What would be the benefits of the comprehensive air transport agreement between the EU and the State of Qatar?

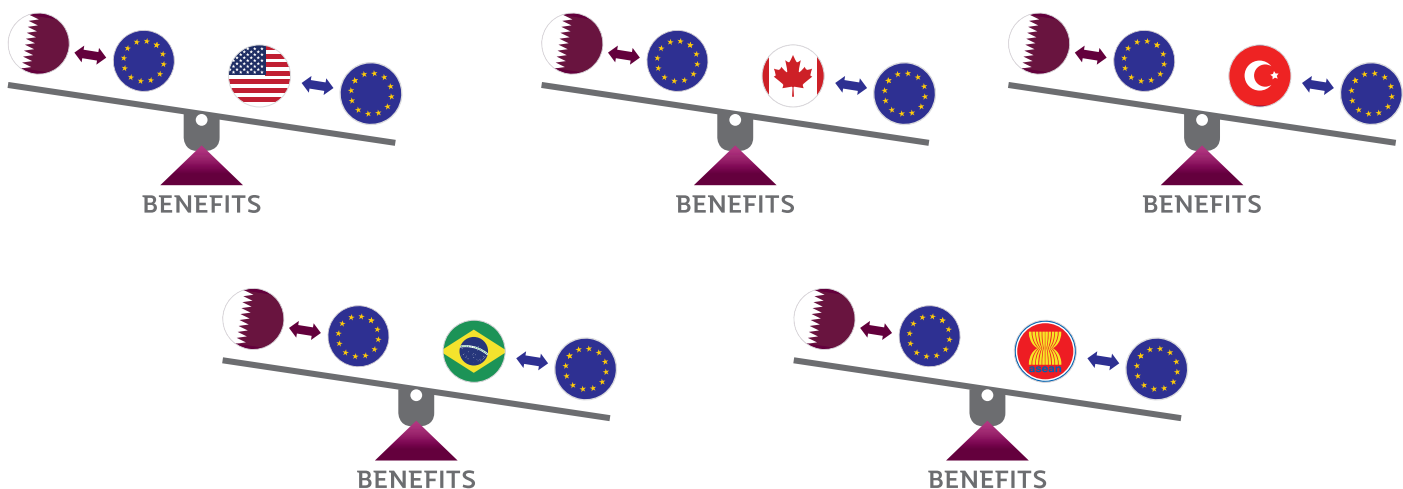
1. Opening the remaining limited markets in Europe
2. Encouraging more European airlines to serve Qatar
3. Achieving better understanding of each others' regulatory environment
4. **Regulatory convergence between the State of Qatar and the EU**



The State of Qatar with its single airline and a single airport is opening its door for all the scheduled, non-scheduled and cargo carriers of the 28 Member States of the EU

What would be the main challenges to reach agreement on the comprehensive air transport agreement?

1. Fair competition: how to reach alignment on what the stakeholders mean by fair and unfair competition
2. Market opening: how would all Member States agree on market opening while the restricted markets in Europe are few and limited
3. How to achieve the balance between 28 Member States and their numerous airlines and one State (Qatar) and one airline (Qatar Airways) on the other side?
4. **How would the European Commission justify any differences in the agreement with Qatar compared to the other comprehensive agreements?**





ICAO carbon reduction deal: Qatar Airways pursues its interest on efficiencies achieved by individual airlines before 2020

Alongside the negotiation of a comprehensive air transport agreement, the State of Qatar and the European Union also showed signs of good cooperation by meeting for bilateral talks during the 39th session of the ICAO Assembly held in Montreal during October 2016.



During the Assembly, ICAO Member States adopted a landmark agreement to reduce carbon emissions from international aviation. Moreover, the State of Qatar joined those 65 Member States, representing more than 86.5% of international aviation activity, which will voluntarily participate in the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme of International Aviation (CORSIA) starting from 2021.

As the national carrier of the State of Qatar, Qatar Airways firmly believes in its responsibility to care for the

environment. As aviation is making a significant contribution to the global response to climate change, our airline is committed to achieving more efficient greenhouse gas emissions through both international and local solutions.

While already commanding one of our industry's youngest and most efficient fleets, Qatar Airways works closely with industry associations on the development of a global policy for managing aviation's greenhouse gas emissions.

Qatar Airways is also enhancing the efficiency of air travel through its fuel optimisation programme. This involves testing and implementing new ways to save fuel and reduce carbon emissions such as:

- Optimising aircraft weight;
- Operational measures focusing on efficient route planning, use of auxiliary power while parking and taxiing procedures;
- Joint research on alternative fuel sources including biomass technology

While Qatar Airways remains committed to voluntarily participate in the CORSIA, we pursue our interest to develop a methodology that recognises efficiencies made by aircraft operators prior to 2020.

“Environmental cooperation is also part of the negotiations between the EU and the State of Qatar. We believe that the ICAO deal will bring all parties closer to work together on carbon neutral growth in international aviation” - said His Excellency, Mr. Akbar Al Baker, Group Chief Executive of Qatar Airways. “We are looking forward to the discussions on this very important matter, and we trust that in the meantime the European Union will not simultaneously operate unilateral measures, such as the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).”

[To learn more about Qatar Airways' commitment on environmental leadership, download our Sustainability report 2015-2016](#)



Qatar Airways' continuous partnership with the EU

Helsinki, Finland launch



The Finnish capital of Helsinki welcomed the first Qatar Airways flight from Doha on 10 October, inaugurating the new daily service that will connect Helsinki to more than 150 destinations worldwide. Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker and the Finnish Ambassador to Qatar, Her Excellency Mrs. Riitta Swan travelled on board the inaugural flight and were greeted by a VIP delegation including Finland's Minister of Transport and Communications, Mrs. Anne Berner; the President and Chief Executive Officer of Finavia, Mr. Kari Savolainen; the Chief Executive Officer of Visit Helsinki, Mrs. Tuulikki Becker; and Finpro Executive Vice President, Head of Visit Finland, Mr. Paavo Virkkunen.

Pisa, Italy launch



Qatar Airways marked its deep commitment to Italy by starting service to its fourth destination in the country, Pisa, on 2 August.

A350 to London Heathrow



Qatar Airways, the global launch customer of Airbus' most advanced aircraft, the A350, began regular scheduled A350 service to London, operating one of the six daily flights with this marque aircraft. The airline recently announced a joint business with oneworld partner British Airways, which took effect from 30 October.

Qatar Liberalises Transit Visas

The State of Qatar recently expanded its transit visa scheme from a maximum two days to four days, and launched an easy online tool to apply in advance. The transit visa is open to all nationalities and Qatar Airways has restructured its fares to ensure the stopover in Doha will not affect the return price. For more information, please visit Discover Qatar at <https://discoverqatar.qatarairways.com>

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All information within is correct at the time of publication.

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