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## **EANS-News: Air Berlin PLC & Co. Luftverkehrs KG / The way is now clear for airberlin's strategic partnership with Etihad Airways**

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Capital measures/Capital increase - investment agreement Etihad Airways

Subtitle: Mehdorn: "The beginning of a successful collaboration"

Connecting flights from Berlin to Abu Dhabi added

24 codeshare flights, linked frequent flyer programs and mutual maintenance of aircraft

Working groups will identify synergies

London/Berlin (euro adhoc) - Following regulatory clearances by German and Austrian authorities, airberlin, Germany's second largest airline, and Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, have today finalised the participation agreement entered into on 19th December 2011 which increased Etihad Airways' capital share of Air Berlin PLC. airberlin has received around EUR73 million for the 31,574,312 shares issued for capital increase, based on a fixed rate of EUR2.31 per share. Etihad Airways has now become the largest single shareholder of airberlin. Etihad Airways' minority share is composed of the newly acquired shares (27.03%) and existing shares of 2.99% (before dilution), which provides Etihad with a voting interest of 29.21%.

airberlin CEO Hartmut Mehdorn said: "I am confident that this is the beginning of a very successful collaboration which will benefit our customers and our company. It opens up unique possibilities for joint future market development and provides the prerequisite for increased synergy and cost optimisation."

The two companies have already formed joint working groups in order to achieve results as quickly as possible. Mehdorn: "airberlin and Etihad Airways can learn from one another, in order to better meet the needs of our passengers. The addition of the flight to Abu Dhabi, the codeshare agreement, the mutual recognition of frequent flyer programs and the mutual maintenance of aircraft in Dusseldorf and Abu Dhabi will set a new pace - a challenge which airberlin and Etihad Airways will meet together."

James Hogan, CEO of Etihad Airways, said: "We are delighted that all the regulatory approvals have been concluded successfully and we can now move forward with plans to create an outstanding offering for passengers on our combined network. The partnership between Etihad Airways and airberlin will have a positive market impact, stimulating competition and ultimately benefiting passengers across the globe. It is a significant milestone in our history and the first step in what will be a very positive association over the coming years."

Less than four weeks after the agreement between airberlin and Etihad Airways had been signed, airberlin added Abu Dhabi to its flight schedule on 15th January. Since then, an airberlin Airbus A330-200 has been flying non-stop from Berlin to Abu Dhabi four times a week (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday). Alongside the connections offered by Etihad Airways, this provides European

passengers with 29 flights per week operated by the strategic partners from four German hubs (Berlin, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Munich) with Abu Dhabi as a destination or stopover. By mid-April of this year, the number of flights will increase to 42 per week.

The start of this new service also marks the beginning of the codeshare agreement concluded between the two airlines on 19th December 2011, which will initially include 24 flights in the route network of both airlines and be expanded gradually. The agreement currently includes the non-stop flights of both partner airlines from Germany to Abu Dhabi and continuing connections from Abu Dhabi to Bangkok, Male and Singapore. In addition, Etihad Airways offers the airberlin flights to and from Basel, Catania, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Hanover, Helsinki, Milan, Rome, Stuttgart, Venice and Zurich under an Etihad Airways flight number. This is valid as of today (24th January) also for airberlin flights from Dusseldorf to Miami, New York-JFK, Salzburg and Vienna.

The airberlin flights from Berlin to Graz, Innsbruck, Salzburg and Vienna will also be marketed by Etihad Airways.

Within the framework of the codeshare flights, airberlin and Etihad Airways will also connect their airberlin topbonus and Etihad Guest frequent flyer programs. By integrating the frequent flyer programs, airberlin and Etihad Airways customers can earn both awards and status miles on flights with the respective partner airline. Frequent fliers who are topbonus Silver or Gold cardholders will enjoy additional status benefits. These include use of the partner airline's priority check-in counter, pre-boarding and extra baggage allowance on Etihad Airways flights. Frequent flyers with a topbonus Gold Card can also access the exclusive Etihad Airways lounges at Abu Dhabi, Dublin, Frankfurt, London and Manchester. Silver, Gold or Gold Elite members of Etihad Guest who are flying with airberlin will also receive the many benefits of airberlin's topbonus frequent flyer program such as access to exclusive waiting areas.

Business Class customers traveling to and from Abu Dhabi can take advantage of a limousine service. Passengers within a 40 km radius of Berlin's Tegel airport will be picked up at home and brought to the airport by a chauffeur. After arrival in Abu Dhabi, Business Class travelers have the opportunity to be driven to any destination in the United Arab Emirates. This service is also available for the return flight. The Etihad Airways codeshare connection from Germany to Abu Dhabi gives Business Class passengers access to an airport transfer service with private driver from Frankfurt and Munich within a radius of 40 kilometers and from Dusseldorf within 60 kilometers.

In the course of establishing Etihad Airways' flights from Abu Dhabi to Dusseldorf and airberlin's flights to Abu Dhabi, the two companies have entered into mutual maintenance agreements. In Dusseldorf, airberlin technik - the aeronautical equipment service provider within the airberlin group - performs the transit check on the Etihad Airways Airbus A330; Etihad Airways performs the same task for airberlin aircrafts in Abu Dhabi.

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