

Media release



ETIHAD AIRWAYS' 33.3 PER CENT INVESTMENT IN DARWIN AIRLINE APPROVED BY SWITZERLAND'S AVIATION REGULATOR

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, today welcomed the decision of Switzerland's Federal Office of Civil Aviation (FOCA) to approve the airline's 33.3 per cent investment in the Swiss regional carrier Darwin Airline.

Since January, 2014, Lugano-based Darwin Airline has operated as Etihad Regional under a brand and partnership agreement with Etihad Airways. FOCA's approval of the Etihad Airways investment now enables the two companies to leverage fully the benefits of their partnership, including codesharing on each other's flights within and beyond Europe.

James Hogan, President and Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Airways, said the investment was in line with the growing trend of consolidation in the airline industry, to ensure the continuation of viable, reliable and stable air services, and to maximise flight connectivity.

Mr Hogan said approval of the investment would enable Etihad Airways and Darwin Airline to work together more closely for the benefit of air travellers in Switzerland, across Europe, and beyond.

But he expressed disappointment that some opportunities for Etihad Airways and Etihad Regional had been diminished or lost because of the length of the regulatory review process, which prevented the introduction of important codeshare services designed to link and strengthen the networks of the two airlines.

"Because of the time taken to approve this partnership, and intense competition during this period, Etihad Regional has been forced to reduce or withdraw services on a number of routes, which were launched on the expectation that they would be supported by traffic flowing between the Etihad Airways global network and the Etihad Regional network in Europe," Mr Hogan said.

"Once formalities are completed to activate the investment, Etihad Regional will have much greater connectivity, not only with Etihad Airways but also with its other partners in Europe, including Alitalia, airberlin and Air Serbia."

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About Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways began operations in 2003, and in 2014 carried 14.8 million passengers. From its Abu Dhabi base, Etihad Airways flies to 111 existing or announced passenger and cargo destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas. The airline has a fleet of 111 Airbus and Boeing aircraft, and more than 200 aircraft on firm order, including 69 Boeing 787s, 25 Boeing 777-X, 62 Airbus A350s and nine Airbus A380s.

Etihad Airways holds equity investments in airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Aer Lingus, Alitalia, Jet Airways and Virgin Australia, and is in the process of formalising an equity investment in Swiss-based Etihad Regional, operated by Darwin Airline. Etihad Airways, along with airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Etihad Regional, Jet Airways and NIKI, also participate in Etihad Airways Partners, a new brand that brings together like-minded airlines to offer customers more choice through improved networks and schedules and enhanced frequent flyer benefits. For more information, please visit: www.etihad.com