

Media Release

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For Immediate Use

BATA: “Clegg’s Speech Misjudges Public Attitude to Aviation Taxes”

Commenting on the Deputy Prime Minister’s speech to the Resolution Foundation on cutting taxation, Simon Buck, Chief Executive of the British Air Transport Association, said:

“It’s all very well for Nick Clegg to talk about cutting tax for the poor and looking at ways to make the tax system “more green” but his aspirations do not square with the Government’s actions and its own findings on public attitudes. For example, this Government is choosing to make an annual sunshine holiday less affordable for many hard pressed families by imposing the highest taxes on flying in the world and will increase the tax even further from 1st April. Bizarrely, the Deputy PM’s remarks are made on the same day as the Government publishes its own survey, showing that most people are opposed to “push” measures that would affect them financially such as higher taxes aimed at discouraging air travel. If there were annual awards for lacking in joined up thinking, this Government would win hands down.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- BATA is the trade body for UK-registered airlines, with members representing all sectors of the industry.
- In 2010, BATA members employed over 71,000 people, operated four-fifths of the UK commercial aircraft fleet and were responsible for some 96% of UK airline output, carrying 119 million passengers and 1 million tonnes of cargo.
- The ten BATA member airlines are: bmi, British Airways, DHL, easyJet, flybe, Jet2.com, Monarch, Thomas Cook, Thomson Airways and Virgin Atlantic.
- The Deputy Prime Minister made a speech to the Resolution Foundation on Thursday 26th January. It is available at <http://www.libdems.org.uk/speeches.aspx>. In it, he said:

“The young couple who used to look forward to the holiday they would book or the car they would buy, but who now know that if the boiler breaks or the washing machine packs up, the money just isn’t there.”

We need to look at what more can be done to “green” the tax system. Not just because we care about the planet we leave our children - although that would be reason enough. But because, when the decision is between taxing pollution or taxing hard-graft, the right impulse is obvious.”

- The Department for Transport has published a report based on a survey of 1137 people conducted by the Office of National Statistics. Entitled *'Public Attitudes to Climate Change & The Impact of Transport 2011'*. The DfT report was issued on 26th January and can be found at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/climate-change-and-impact-of-transport-2011/>

The report states:

"Most adults were opposed to the 'push' measures which would affect them financially: higher taxes to discourage car use and to discourage air travel."

"Only a fifth (20%) of respondents said they were willing to reduce the amount they travelled by plane, while over twice as many (46%) were unwilling to do so. Even among those who were very concerned about climate change only 28% were willing to reduce their air travel, while 40% were unwilling to do so."

"Of the government policy options asked about in the survey, higher taxes to encourage less air travel was one of only two policy options for which there was net opposition (35%)" with 19% of people supporting increasing aviation tax or other charges – while 54% of respondents were opposed.

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