

Media Release

**Date of Issue: Tuesday 10th January 2012
For Immediate Use**

BATA Response to High Speed 2 Announcement

Responding to the news that the Government is set to give the go-ahead to the £17 billion HS2 line from London to Birmingham, Simon Buck, Chief Executive of the British Air Transport Association said:

“While this Government appears to recognise the value of investment in public infrastructure to improve domestic transport links, we deplore the absence of any similar commitment to boosting Britain’s links with the rest of the world. The Government appears eager to invest over £30 billion in building new railway lines in grandiose show-case schemes, cutting huge swathes through the English countryside, but at the same time has vetoed airport expansion where it is desperately needed because they say the environmental cost is too high. Despite its cost, HS2 will do nothing to improve the UK’s connectivity with the rest of the world or domestically, with more remote parts of the UK that will never be connected to high speed rail, such as Northern Ireland.

Our major airports are currently losing out on air routes and hence new business and jobs to our international competitors because they do not currently have the runway capacity needed to add in new services. New runway capacity would be privately funded and would not require public money, thus representing far better value for money than a hugely expensive new rail project. If the Government wants to kick start the UK economy, Ministers must break out of their “Little Britain” approach to transport infrastructure provision and recognise that the UK needs to develop its trading links to the growing economies of the world.”

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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.

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