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AIR FRANCE AND KLM WELCOME DOT'S PRELIMINARY DECISION ABOUT ANTI-TRUST IMMUNITY FOR THE SIX SKYTEAM MEMBER AIRLINES

In its Show Cause Order (SCO)¹ published on April 9 2008, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) proposes to grant the application by six SkyTeam airlines for anti-trust immunity (ATI) on transatlantic routes. Air France, Delta Air Lines, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Northwest, Alitalia and Czech Airlines had filed a joint application with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) on June 28, 2007.

Air France and KLM welcome DOT's position on ATI. This preliminary decision seems to be a logical response to both the Air France KLM merger and the new EU-U.S. Open Skies agreement² that came into force on 30 March 2008. Such immunity would also enable Air France, KLM, Delta and Northwest to set up a joint venture agreement among the four of them and ultimately integrate their trans-Atlantic operations.

The six SkyTeam carriers have applied for ATI so as to be in a position – through a more integrated commercial approach – to reap the benefits of the new EU-U.S. agreement by offering their customers more flights and being able to compete more effectively against rival alliances on the transatlantic routes.

Air France and KLM will welcome a quick and final decision from the US Authorities.

¹ "Show Cause Order": a preliminary decision published by DOT and submitted to interested third parties for their comments

² Air France and KLM have been active supporters of the policy to open up the transatlantic market for the benefit of the air transport sector and the traveling public. The EU-U.S. agreement offers European and American consumers considerable new opportunities, with airlines now in a position to operate or market services between any point in the EU and the U.S.

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