

Commissioner Neelie Kroes
Directorate-General Competition
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

BA/AA ANTI-TRUST IMMUNITY

I am writing to you to express my concern about the anti-competitive application by British Airways (BA) and American Airlines (AA) for anti-trust immunity. This proposal poses insurmountable competition issues and raises significant concerns regarding the adverse consumer impact it will have.

If the application were to be approved, BA/AA would have a stranglehold on London Heathrow-US services and an overwhelming frequency and schedule advantage over other airlines on the densest London Heathrow-US markets. As a result, BA/AA would enjoy a position of unchallengeable market dominance. Such presence by BA/AA on individual routes would stifle competition from existing carriers. Even if other carriers were able to access Heathrow, the dominance which BA/AA would have over the most popular Heathrow-US markets would deter competition from new entrants.

I trust that your Directorate-General will examine all the evidence carefully and pay particular attention to the damage to consumers' interests that approval of the application would cause.

Sincerely,