Hon Gerry Brownlee
Minister of Transport

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New Zealand’s European air links strengthened

Transport Minister Gerry Brownlee says the signing in Leipzig, Germany overnight of an air services agreement with Finland is another example of how the government is delivering on its commitment to the extension and liberalisation of international air services agreements.

“This agreement will rank among the most liberal air services agreements in the world,” Mr Brownlee says.

“It sets a high standard which New Zealand hopes to emulate in agreements with other states.”

Mr Brownlee, who is in Leipzig to attend the 2014 International Transport Forum Summit, signed the agreement alongside Ms Minna Kivimäki, Director General of the Transport Policy Department at the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications.

He says negotiations were particularly swift as Finland and New Zealand share similar views on the regulation of international air transport.

“Our alignment of views means under the agreement there are no restrictions on air transport between, beyond, and within the two countries.”

The agreement with Finland includes the exchange of ‘cabotage’ or ‘8th freedom’ rights. This allows airlines to carry domestic passengers within the territory of the other country.

“Finnair has already applied, and has been approved, to use the new agreement and is now offering code-share services to New Zealand via Hong Kong, with Cathay Pacific operating the Auckland-Hong Kong sector and Finnair operating the Hong Kong-Helsinki sector,” Mr Brownlee says.
The Finland agreement is one of six agreements approved by Cabinet recently. Alongside the new agreement with Finland, New Zealand has also negotiated new agreements with Saudi Arabia, Jamaica, Ethiopia, Togo and Zambia.

Mr Brownlee also conducted an exchange of letters to confirm an amendment to the existing agreement with representatives from Luxembourg while in Leipzig. The amendment to the Luxembourg agreement sees the exchange of ‘7th freedom’ cargo rights between the countries.

Amendments to other agreements which have also been agreed include Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden.

In all, the Ministry of Transport negotiated 15 new or amended agreements in five days at the 2013 International Civil Aviation Negotiation Conference held in Durban, South Africa in December.

“Today is another example of the government continuing to work to implement its ambitious International Air Transport Policy.

“In less than two years since the policy was announced New Zealand has negotiated over 30 new or amended agreements,” Mr Brownlee says

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