



*The Railway Forum*

## ***Press Release***

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16 December 2003

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# **'AIRPORTS DECISION WELCOME BUT FURTHER EXPANSION MUST CONSIDER OTHER TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS' SAYS FORUM**

Following very protracted consideration the announcement today by the Secretary of State for Transport, Alistair Darling that limited airport expansion at Stansted (and possible further expansion at Heathrow) will go ahead is a welcome recognition that Britain has a thriving travel future.

However the weakness of considering such expansion on an 'airports only' basis has been well demonstrated over a consultation period that has lasted nearly two years. Across Europe successful strategies for intermediate distance intercity traffic (between 150 and 500 miles) are now increasingly based on an approach that assumes a mix of high-speed rail and air.

'Today's announcement is good news and will further develop our national transport capacity', says Adrian Lyons, Director General of The Railway Forum. 'However an 'airports

only' approach to planning has limitations, particularly in meeting overall travel needs over distances of 150 to 500 miles. On the continent high-speed rail is increasingly seen as a viable means of travel for these journeys. At present we are not planning to do this in the UK. Before we enter the next phase of airport expansion the long distance, high-speed rail solution must be considered.'

-Ends-

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The White Paper *The Future of Air Transport* can be viewed at: [www.dft.gov.uk/aviation/whitepaper/](http://www.dft.gov.uk/aviation/whitepaper/)
2. Over 3,000 kilometres of high-speed rail line are currently in operation in mainland Europe with a further 2,700 under construction. When the Channel Tunnel Rail Link is complete in 2007 the UK will have only 109 kilometres of high-speed route. There are currently no plans for further expansion.
3. The Railway Forum is an industry-wide body sponsored by the majority of the train operating companies including Eurostar, as well as Network Rail, all three major rolling stock leasing companies, the Passenger Transport Executives, London Underground, most of the infrastructure maintenance companies and many manufacturing and other businesses serving the UK rail industry. In all we have some 70 members. Our key role is to act as a think tank, information exchange and point of contact for those committed to and interested in our industry.

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