

Star Alliance welcomes Spanair as latest member

March 31, 2003 – Spanair, the Spanish carrier that is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year, will officially join Star Alliance tomorrow, April 1. With the addition of Spanair to its roster of world class airlines, Star Alliance has significantly enhanced its coverage of the Iberian peninsula and Southern Europe.

"I am delighted to welcome Spanair as a member of The airline network for Earth," said Jaan Albrecht, CEO of Star Alliance. "Spanair offers a true alternative of domestic and international services to, from and within Spain, the Balearic and Canary Islands. Star Alliance will now effectively triple the number of destinations being served in this region, from six to 18, which is quite an achievement and good news for the consumers.

"With the inclusion of Spanair, the Star Alliance network now covers 700 airports in 128 countries around the world," he added.

Spanair's membership of Star Alliance was approved by the Star Alliance Chief Executive Board at its meeting in Shanghai in June of last year. Since then the Spanish carrier has been working to comply with the requirements that are a prerequisite for joining the alliance. They include code-share, through check-in, and reciprocal frequent flyer agreements, lounge access, branding, training and joint policies on a number of issues.

As of April 1, members of Spanair's frequent flyer program Spanair Plus are able to collect and redeem points across all Star Alliance airlines. Spanair Plus Gold members have access to more than 500 lounges at airports all over the world. The airline's customers can enjoy the benefits of unique and competitive Star Alliance products, such as Round the World fares as well as regional airpasses for North America, Brazil and the Pacific.

"Spanair is now part of the most global airline alliance that serves all parts of the world with smooth and convenient connections. I am proud to extend the benefits of Star Alliance to our customers," said Gonzalo Pascual, President and Chairman of the Board of Spanair.

Spanair started operations in 1988. More than 56 million passengers have since flown with the airline, which is owned by Spanair Holding and the SAS Group. At present 78 per cent of the company's flights are scheduled, the rest being charter operations. The number of passengers carried in 2002 was almost eight million, and revenues reached 786 million.

