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Norwegian Air Celebrates One-Year Anniversary of U.S. Service – And Sets Record Straight About its Operation

Norwegian Air has for the past year offered 100,000 Americans the ability to fly affordably between the United States and Scandinavia on its fleet of brand new Boeing 787 Dreamliners. Norwegian has also carried 200,000 passengers to the U.S., giving a boost to American tourism.

The airline has created hundreds of new jobs in the air as well as thousands

on the ground in the travel- and tourism-related industries. The airline has been very well received by the travelling public; high-profile politicians, tourism authorities and local governments have also given their support.

Unfortunately the labor unions and U.S. airlines are continuing to do everything they can to block the competition.

A few decades ago, flying domestically in the U.S. was limited to the wealthy few. The entry of low-cost carriers such as Southwest Airlines and JetBlue has made travelling from coast to coast easier and more affordable for everyone. In addition, the arrival of the low-cost carriers has created millions of new jobs in the travel and tourism industry.

Norwegian believes that competition on intercontinental flights is long overdue. Flights between the U.S. and Europe have traditionally been way too expensive. Why should a flight between New York and Europe cost three times as much as a flight between New York and Los Angeles? The flight to Europe is only about an hour longer, sometimes even less. That's why Norwegian launched record low fares in May last year starting at \$99 one-way with industry-leading non-stop service on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner between the U.S. and Scandinavia. Passengers are thrilled about the ability to fly affordably and comfortably on the company's non-stop service from New York; Fort Lauderdale; Orlando; Los Angeles and San Francisco to Europe. Competitors and the unions, on the other hand, are using foul play trying to stop Norwegian.

Airline Pilots Organization (ALPA), other labor unions and several U.S. airlines have over the past months made a number of false and misleading allegations about Norwegian in the media, to the Department of Transportation (D.O.T.) and to members of Congress. This is a frantic attempt at blocking competition, consequently preventing the American people access to affordable airfare to Europe and blocking the creation of new jobs in America.

Below is a brief Q&A that responds to some of the most serious accusations.

Q&A - Norwegian responds to slanderous allegations from labor unions and opponents:

Accusation #1: *Norwegian has established its subsidiary Norwegian Air International (NAI) in Ireland as a “Flag of convenience” and to circumvent the labor laws of Norway and the U.S. labor laws.*

Truth #1: Absolutely not. Norwegian has established its long-haul company in Dublin for several reasons. The main reason is access to future traffic rights to and from the EU (Norway is not a member of the EU). Norwegian has more than 260 aircraft on order and the route network will expand rapidly in the years to come. Another important reason for choosing Ireland, and not another country within the EU (though several other European countries – including the UK and Sweden - were considered), is because Ireland has decided to fully adapt the Cape Town Convention, which provides Norwegian with better financing conditions. Furthermore, Norwegian’s establishment in Ireland does not affect export guarantees in connection with our financing. As well as offering one of the highest ranked civil aviation authorities in the world, Ireland is also a considerable cluster for the aviation industry; major leasing companies that Norwegian cooperates with have offices in Dublin.

It is important to stress that Ireland was not chosen because the country has specific rules and regulations that allow the use of American or Asian crew, like some politicians and unions have claimed. The fact is that Norwegian could have based its long-haul company in any other European country and still used American and Asian crew, the way several other European airlines have been operating for years.

Norwegian’s employees in the U.S. follow U.S. labor laws, the company’s employees in Norway follow Norwegian labor laws and employees in the UK follow UK labor laws, etc. The airline fully complies with European safety standards (EASA) and its crews are trained according to EU standards and the company’s own additional training programs. Ireland, where the long-haul company is located, has one of the highest ranked civil aviation authorities in the world.

Accusation #2:*Norwegian is offering substandard working conditions*

Truth #2: Norwegian always follows the rules and regulations in all the markets we operate, offering competitive wages and conditions. We assume that our U.S. competitors do the same when hiring crews in for instance South America.

Norwegian has already employed more than 300 American cabin crew members in Fort Lauderdale and New York, and is currently recruiting New York-based pilots for its 787 Dreamliner operation. Norwegian received almost 6,000 applicants for its 300 cabin crew positions. The company's American employees say that their wages and benefits are superior to those of their counterparts at U.S. airlines. Pilots flying intercontinentally have a global pay scale, which means that a long-haul pilot based in Norway makes about the same as a long-haul pilot based in Asia or the U.S. See interview with one of our colleagues [here](#).

Accusation #3: Norwegian's business model compromises safety

Truth #3: Norwegian has been running a safe airline operation since 1993 with no registered accidents or major incidents. Safety has always been the company's number one priority. The company fully complies with European safety standards (EASA) and its crews are trained according to EU standards and the company's own additional training programs. Ireland, where the long-haul company is located, has one of the highest ranked civil aviation authorities in the world.

Accusation #4: Norwegian is government-sponsored

Truth #4: Norwegian is 100 percent privately owned and has never received any government subsidies.

Accusation #5: Norwegian's Singapore company is set up to legalize sub-standard pilot conditions

Truth #5: Norwegian's Singapore company is the primary pilot recruitment vehicle in Asia. Singapore offers a business friendly environment and its government has extensive experience cooperating with western companies. As our operation grows, we will establish more pilot bases. We are currently recruiting in New York and are also considering London.

Accusation #6: Norwegian is union hostile

Truth #6: No. A majority of Norwegian's pilots and cabin crew members in Scandinavia are union members. Technicians and administrative employees are also union members.

Accusation #7: Norwegian doesn't comply with the Open Skies Agreement

Truth #7: Incorrect. Norwegian meets all the legal and regulatory requirements in the Open Skies Agreement between the U.S. and the EU.

The legacy carriers did everything in their power to stop low-cost carriers like Southwest Airlines to enter the domestic skies. Now history is repeating itself as an airline from Norway is taking on the big guys in order to offer everyone affordable flights across the Atlantic. If the authorities listen to the legacy carriers and the unions, the losers will be customers who will be left with no other option than airlines that offer astronomic fares and poor in-flight service. The American people deserve to have a choice.

For more background information, please visit <http://www.openourskies.com/>

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Norwegian Air Shuttle ASA, commercially branded “Norwegian”, is a low-cost airline listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange. Norwegian is the second largest airline in Scandinavia and third largest low cost carrier in Europe. More than 20 million passengers fly on its network per year. Norwegian has a route portfolio that stretches across Europe into North Africa and the Middle East, as well as long-haul flights to the US and Southeast Asia. The company has a total of 416 routes to 126 destinations and employs approximately 4,500 people in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, UK, Spain and Thailand. The company has 258 undelivered aircraft on firm order. Norwegian was founded in 1993 and its headquarter is in Fornebu, Norway. In 2013, Norwegian was voted Europe’s best low-cost carrier of the year by the renowned SkyTrax World Airline Awards. Norwegian offers better leg room than most competitors, in-flight WiFi, world-class punctuality and a fleet of 94 aircraft with an average age of only 4.8 years.

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