

OPODO ONLINE TRAVEL: NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER

London, November 14, 2001 - Opodo, the new online travel company backed by Europe's nine leading airlines, says its first site launch next month will revolutionise the online travel market and is needed 'now more than ever' for the UK and European travel industries.

Showing the first preview today of its soon-to-be launched website at major industry event **World Travel Market**, Opodo CEO Giovanni Bisignani said Opodo's low cost infrastructure would enable it to provide a crucial vehicle for airlines to fill seats – and ultimately pass savings on to consumers.

"Never before has the travel industry needed such a low-cost distribution vehicle," Mr Bisignani said. "It's a win-win situation. The airlines win by having a new cost effective vehicle to move inventory. European travellers win through Opodo's ability to secure amazing offers for its customers, and in injecting new competition to keep the travel industry focused on great value and customer service. "

Opodo CEO Giovanni Bisignani said that Opodo's first site opodo.de is due to launch in Germany next month. Opodo aims to be the leader in online travel by 2004, and will inject new competition in to the market.

For its German launch, Opodo will offer 150,000 special fares to top destinations, and believes it will be unrivalled in its value, ease of use and service.

Opodo – which will offer flights, hotels, car hire and insurance – will be the first truly Pan European travel service with the right tools and information to meet the diverse needs of European travellers. Each Opodo web service will reflect the local culture, travel patterns, language – even preferred payment methods.

Key features are:

- 40,000 pages of useful expert information integrated with special fares covering 1,700 destinations, including interactive maps, guides and daily weather updates - all on an easy to view and use site – covering 80 per cent available capacity in every market.
- Can book and fly the same day
- Reserve flights for up to 24 hours
- Only displays available flights
- Don't have to register to use
- Can request your preferred seat on booking
- Advanced search capability – by destination or holiday themes
- Hundreds of thousands of maps to find specific locations anywhere in the world
- Guides to 180 of the world's busiest airports
- Quick search tool gives time-sensitive consumers speedy access straight to booking

- Explore the World – provides consumers with the tools and inspiration
- Highlights 10,000 key tourist attractions around the world

Superior Customer Service

Opodo will set new levels in customer care and attention.

- Real travel experts on hand to help 24 hours a day, seven days a week to offer advice and information.
- We openly show our customer service contact details and welcome calls.
- For Germany, our customer centre is based in Berlin to provide local insight.
- No time limits on providing the advice you need.
- Gain advice by communications from phone, post, email, facsimile plus special call back service

State of the art technology

- Opodo's has built its own technology platform to limit site and traffic problems – making it quick, easy and reliable
- 16,000 hours of testing of opodo.de, with 18 complete cycles of end-to-end-testing
- 30 German native speakers spent 3 months providing full-time feedback about the site

In addition to thousands of special fares, Opodo provides a choice of 480 airlines; 54,000 hotels; 23,000 car hire locations and travel insurance.

Best of all, Opodo is backed by Europe's leading airlines, 'best of breed' partners and a world-class management team.

Mr Bisignani said Opodo was launching at a key time to capitalise on a major growth market.

"In Europe, the trend of booking travel online is set to explode. Already more than 126 million people are on-line across Europe, with travel and leisure accounting for 26 per cent of the total ecommerce market. Analysts forecast that on-line travel sales will grow from 4.5 billion Euros to as high as 38.7 billion Euros by 2006¹, with early signs showing speedy recovery since September 11.

"The internet could be the added value that is desperately needed by the industry. No other new strategy reduces costs of distribution and increases ticket sales at the same time. By reducing the cost of distribution and increasing online sales in a cost-effective way, a revolution in European travel becomes possible. Opodo aims to be at the forefront of this revolution."

¹ Forrester

Opodo is set to launch its first web service in Germany, opodo.de, and in UK and France early next year, and throughout Europe during 2002 and 2003.

“Opodo spent many weeks speaking with European travellers and is delivering a network of specially tailored sites to put the customer in control, giving them the tools, the information and inspiration they need to go where they want, when they want and how they want.”

Notes to editors

Opodo was created by Aer Lingus, Air France, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, Finnair, Iberia, KLM and Lufthansa.

Note 1: *on selected flights.

Media contact:

Carolyn Vicars
Opodo Corporate Communications
Ph – 0044 (0) 207 664 7934
Email: pr@opodo.com