

# PRESS RELEASE



19 May 2010

## **Ash Cloud: Passengers move to more reliable modes of transport**

Confronted by uncertainty, the travelling public is voting with its feet. Eurotunnel has observed a change in customer behaviour since the Icelandic volcanic eruption in April and the recent developments which caused the cancellation of more than one thousand flights to and from European airports on 17 May. Both Heathrow and Gatwick airports were closed from the evening of 16 May until the afternoon of 17 May. Amsterdam Schipol airport, one of Europe's main transit hubs, cancelled 500 flights and left 60,000 passengers stranded.

The vagaries of the weather have meant that customers are seeking more information and Eurotunnel has seen a **30% increase in its online bookings. Visits to Eurotunnel's website increased by 50% and calls to the contact centre went up by 40%** on 17 May. Reservations for the coming weeks show that, given the uncertainty and unpredictability linked to the ash cloud, customers are choosing in favour of the Shuttle. **The Shuttle offers more security of travel** in relation to the weather, it is less costly (a car with several passengers brings considerable cost savings) and is also more environmentally friendly. The Shuttle is the perfect marriage of speed ease and relaxation. Bookings can be made over the internet at [www.eurotunnel.com](http://www.eurotunnel.com). If you arrive early for your departure you can either (where space is available) take an earlier Shuttle or relax in the passenger terminal where you will find food and drinks, shops, restaurants, books, newspapers and magazines.

The closure of a large part of European airspace created a significant flow of traffic towards Eurotunnel's Shuttle Services, which continued to run between the UK and France, with a departure every 15 minutes, without any impact on service from the ash cloud. Crossing times remained constant at 35 minutes.

**Eurotunnel also made additional space available for Eurostar**, enabling them to run four extra trains to and from London during the same period.

Eurotunnel's inherent flexibility gives it the capacity to react to changes in demand. In times like these, this flexibility and reliability are particularly appreciated by customers. The Channel Tunnel is fully operational and, even during periods of increased demand, the infrastructure demonstrates its value whilst prices and quality of service remain constant.