



## Frequent Flyer news released on September 15, 2009

Continental will join the Star Alliance on October 27 and has now presented the first corresponding changes to **OnePass**. Unfortunately, Continental has not based this exercise on any best practice programs within or outside of Star Alliance, but has factually copied United's **Mileage Plus** - probably in anticipation of a possible merger of the two companies. The program loses a lot of its attractiveness like that. The major cutbacks are an increase of award levels, which is partially really hefty, and a reduction of the Business Class bonus to 25% - currently it still goes up to 100%. OnePass members will not be able to use upgrade awards on Star Alliance partners either in a first time.

The announcement came quite as a surprise that the number 2 and 3 in the Spanish market, Star Alliance member *Spanair* and SkyTeam member *Air Europa*, now cooperate. While both of them face various problems, this step could not really have been expected. The cooperation also embraces the participation of Air Europa in Spanair's Frequent Flyer Program, **Spanair Plus**, while Spanair can't do the same the other way round since Air Europa has no longer an own program as associated SkyTeam member, but uses the one of Air France KLM, **Flying Blue**, where Spanair doesn't figure as partner, however. While Spanair was initially talking about becoming a partner in Flying Blue, nothing like that can now be heard anymore.

Since August 18, **Executive Club** members have been receiving status points at discounted Economy fares, too. Similar to mileage credits, one receives 25% of the status points of Economy Full Fares at these fares. This change applies to *British Airways* as well as to **oneworld** flights. It is worth recalling that at least four flights per year on British Airways itself are required in order to be able to qualify for Silver or Gold level in the Executive Club.

Many travellers are having problems this year to renew their elite status as a result of reduced travel activities. Airlines are trying to address this in different manners, from individual solutions upon request to generally eased rules for status renewal or promotions to receive additional status miles as currently offered by three major programs. American Airlines offers double status miles on all flights to **AAdvantage** members from September 02 through December 15. Moreover, existing elite members get a choice of additional benefits upon reaching specific thresholds. The first part of the offer - double status miles - was also copied by United for its **Mileage Plus** one day later. The offer of **Miles & More** looks, however, comparably pale: Only during September and October and only on intra-European flights, one receives double status miles on flights of *Lufthansa* and the other Miles & More operators such as *Swiss*, *Austrian Airlines* and *LOT*.

LAN introduced new award levels in the **LanPass** program. In function of availability, three different award levels in Economy Class now apply to LAN flights. Also award levels for **oneworld** and other partners were modified, whereby Business Class flights were increased almost altogether (sometimes even by quite a lot), while new distance categories were introduced for short-haul flights on the other hand. Those became much cheaper than before like that.