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Legal Alert

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NOTABLE CHANGES AFFECTING THE OPERATIONS OF COMMERCIAL PRESENCES OF FOREIGN AIRLINES IN VIETNAM

Since 01 July 2026, the Law on Civil Aviation of Vietnam 2025 and Decree No. 208/2026/ND-CP on air transport ("**Decree 208**") officially take effect, replacing the Law on Civil Aviation of Vietnam 2006, as amended and supplemented in 2014. These new legal documents introduce significant changes to the operations of commercial presences of foreign airlines in Vietnam, with the key points as follows:

1. Changes to the model of commercial presence:

- Under the prevailing regulations, a foreign airline may establish a representative office or a branch in Vietnam in accordance with the laws on commerce and the international treaties to which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a party. Accordingly, the model of ticket sales office of a foreign airline has been abolished.
- Representative offices and ticket sales offices established before Decree 208 takes effect remain valid until they are replaced by a license for the establishment of a representative office or branch of a foreign trader in Vietnam in accordance with the laws on commerce.

2. Changes to the competent managing authority

The local Department of Industry and Trade is the authority that receives and appraises applications, and issues, amends and re-issues operating licenses for representative offices and branches of foreign airlines in Vietnam.

3. Changes to the reporting regime

Representative offices and branches are required to submit a report on the previous year's operations to the local Department of Industry and Trade before 30 January of the following year.

We recommend that foreign airlines proactively review and assess the impact of the new regulations on their plans to establish commercial presences in Vietnam, as well as on the current operations of their Representative Offices and Ticket Sales Offices, so as to ensure full compliance with the prevailing legal requirements.

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