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Preface

Connectivity in its most inclusive form can be defined as the ability or effort to establish and maintain a connection between two or more points. Such effort runs the whole history of humanity and has been the laboratory to every social interaction, development, or venture.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in his novel *Meister's Apprenticeship* gives perhaps the most comprehensive and most lyrical rendering of human communication: "The world is so empty if one thinks only of mountains, rivers & cities; but to know someone who thinks & feels with us, & who, though distant, is close to us in spirit, this makes the earth for us an inhabited garden."

Communication, if not a synonym, is closely related to connectivity which in turn over the last seventy years refers to aviation. The advances in aircraft technology, in communication systems and the birth and the development of internet have annihilated distances. To make the round of the world you do not need eighty days but rather some hours. Journeys, tourism, international trade and any kind of human activity, economic or not, are now based on connectivity. Indeed our planet has become to a great extent a global "inhabited garden" and aviation is arguably the catalyst to this process.

Airports as part of the aviation business are much more than mere landing fields. In their more simplistic form are infrastructure providers which are sophisticated depending on their size, location or the applicable regulatory regime and complex enterprises providing a variety of services to airlines and passengers; in any case airports, along with airlines, are the facilitators of connectivity between people in any continent, State or region.

This book discusses the nature of airport charges, the factors determining their price structure and the effects of the implementation of the Directive 12/2009 on airport charges to the EU Member-States.

Further it provides an overview of the application of the competition rules, including the provisions on State aid to airports in the EU, based on the decisional practice of the EU Commission and the Court of the European Union.

Rejecting that all airports are natural monopolies in the EU, it proposes a methodology for the delineation of airports' relevant product market and for the