AIRLINES FOR EUROPE

PRESS RELEASE

Europe's leading airlines ask policymakers to strengthen competitiveness and keep Europe connected

BY A4E

Brussels,

Brussels, 27 March 2025– The CEOs of 17 of Europe's leading airline groups are asking policymakers in Brussels and Member States to urgently commit to policy choices that protect the competitiveness of Europe's airlines and keep air travel accessible for all Europeans.

A new report by Steer Economics, to be published by A4E, will show that costs for A4E airlines associated with legislative and similar regulatory measures have tripled over the past decade to the tune of €15 billion in 2024; a sum that could have funded 300 next-generation, fuel-efficient aircraft. Without urgent action now, this could double to €27.5 billion in 2030- a direct consequence of an incomplete EU single market, inefficient airspace management and escalating sustainability-related levies.

These costs have a direct impact on Europe's economy. Studies show that every 10% increase in air connectivity translates to a 0.5% boost in GDP per capita and a 1.6% increase in jobs[1]. Despite this, policy in Europe is generating an ever-increasing cost burden that is harming Europe's ability to connect people and compete globally, as well as its attractiveness as a place to do business.

In response to these risks, and speaking at the Airlines for Europe (A4E) Summit in Brussels where they met with Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism Apostolos Tzitzikostas, the CEOs listed measures critical for the competitiveness of the sector:

- Manage airlines' transition to net zero – reviewing Fit for 55 to:

1. Bring the cost of SAF down in the forthcoming Sustainable Transport Investment Plan (STIP)

2. Address the climate effects from aviation at a global level through a stronger CORSIA and promote an equal price of carbon emissions for all carriers

- **Ensure any reform of EU261 passenger rights leads to a clear, fair and balanced regulation for passengers and airlines, reflects operational realties and is cost neutral**
- **Avoid additional aviation taxes becoming the default position for national governments**
- **Member State governments should hold ANSPs accountable for their performance this Summer 2025 and urgently address airspace reform to reduce delays and carbon emissions.**

"*Competitiveness is the word on everyone's lips in Brussels and today our CEOs have set out what that means for Europe's airlines. The simple fact is that Europe is becoming too expensive to do business and as a result passengers are switching to non-EU destinations, hubs and carriers*" said Ourania Georgoutsakou, Managing Director of Airlines for Europe.

"*Flying is and will remain an essential element of how we in Europe remain connected to each other and to the world. It is critical to European integration and economic growth. The time for talking is over. Now is the time for decisive action and reform*" she continued.

The Summit also saw Benjamin Smith, CEO of Air France-KLM, assume the Chairmanship of A4E.

Speaking as he took the helm for the next twelve months from Ryanair's Michael O'Leary he said, "*the aviation industry is determined to work with policymakers in order to come up with concrete solutions to increase the competitiveness of European airlines, create a level playing field with non-EU competitors and decarbonise our sector. These are all intertwined challenges, key to Europe's sovereignty, that must be addressed collectively. Neglecting even one aspect will undermine the success of the others.*"

ENDS

About A4E

Airlines for Europe (A4E) is Europe's largest airline association. Based in Brussels, A4E works with policymakers to ensure aviation policy continues to connect Europeans with the world in a safe, competitive and sustainable manner. With a modern fleet of over 3,700 aircraft, A4E airlines carried over 771 million passengers in 2024 and served nearly 2,800 destinations across Europe and the wider world. Each year, A4E members transport more than 54 million tonnes of vital goods and equipment either by freighters or passenger aircraft.

Media contacts

Kevin Hiney

Communications Director

Email: kevin.hiney@a4e.eu

Phone: +32 499 82 82 94

1 ACI Europe Benefits of Airports and Air Connectivity, 2025