

Information

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ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN AIRLINES: 'DISMAY' AT FRANKFURT AIRPORT'S APPROACH TO PRICING

Hammering out price increases across negotiating table reflects a 'lack of vision' by one of Europe's major hubs

The Association of European Airlines, which represents the interests of Europe's major network airlines – transporting over 370 million passengers annually – reacted with disbelief to the manner in which the CEO of Fraport – the company which owns and operates Frankfurt Airport – explained the deal struck between the airport and its users. In press reports, Dr Stefan Schulte was quoted as saying that the partners had agreed on a fee increase for 2010, and had furthermore decided to reach an agreement on further increases up to and including 2015. Dr Schulte was then quoted as emphasizing the need for raising charges by suggesting that they were 'essential' to finance Frankfurt's 'future competitiveness'.

Airlines, however, maintain that European competitiveness can only be achieved sustainably if the entire aviation value chain becomes competitive. *"Aviation powers the global economy and generates 8% of global GDP", explained AEA's Secretary General Ulrich Schulte-Strathaus. "If Europe's economy is to recover from the current economic devastation, it needs a vision as to how to do so sustainably. Only a cost efficient industry is internationally competitive, and this is especially true for aviation. The times are over when airports could simply rely, as still does Fraport, upon traffic growth and additional airport charges as means of funding their expenditures. That's the old approach. As airlines seek to create new product combinations and customising them to market requirements, they need a new, close and differentiated relationship with airports".*

AEA and its members are working with airports and air navigation service providers to jointly establish how cost efficiencies can be improved. *"Several airports are open for ideas and innovative ways of funding their investments. Key is to overcome the current crisis in such a way that it becomes a catalyst for sustainable mid-term recovery. The crisis is not a passing phenomenon, as Fraport appears to believe with its goal being to maintain increases on airport charges. The crisis is a driver for solutions. Aviation can and will continue to provide the service the customers want at the price they are prepared to pay whilst reducing the environmental impact of transportation", says Ulrich Schulte-Strathaus.*

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