

Information

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ALITALIA'S CEO SAYS EUROPEAN AIRLINES MUST PREPARE FOR "NEW NORMAL"

Rocco Sabelli confirms commitment to promote sustainable recovery of airline sector

Alitalia's President and Chief Executive Officer Rocco Sabelli was recently elected by his peers as member of the Board of the Association of European Airlines. He met with the Association's Secretary General, Ulrich Schulte-Strathaus, to discuss the Association's goals for 2010, as well as the issues the airline sector should confront.

In discussions with journalists, AEA's Secretary General reaffirmed that he did not share the optimism of some economists for 2010. "Indications are that the economic recovery will be more protracted in Europe than in other regions", he said. "Furthermore two thirds of last year's losses of €3.5 billion were due to significantly depressed price levels, the rest was the traffic volume decrease. Even if traffic levels improve, the revenues are unlikely to ever return to pre-crisis levels."

Mr Sabelli agreed. "Airlines are actively involved in promoting the security of air transport, they have reported milestone achievements in mitigating the environmental impact of air traffic growth – but the key for sustainable success is twofold: establishing the trust of our passengers that we will deliver consistently, and developing products that the market needs. There is no way airlines can expect a return to pre-crisis conditions. The crisis has fundamentally changed the way we do business."

Mr Sabelli said he believed that all airlines must prepare for a "new normal"; he said that airlines would develop new, differentiated products to provide value for money. Governments expect the airline industry to stop moaning and instead outline what needs to be done for the industry to recover sustainably. "I am happy to see that this association has taken the lead in developing such proposals, for example for an environmentally-friendly air traffic management. And I will be happy to contribute to the success of such proposals."

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