



PRESS RELEASE

ELFAA calls on EU Transport Ministers to agree equitable compensation, following their closure of airspace

3 May 2010, Brussels – On the occasion of the extraordinary meeting of the EU Transport Council on Tuesday 4 May, the European Low Fares Airline Association (ELFAA) calls upon Transport Ministers to act swiftly to confirm compensation for airlines following states' decision to close European airspace for a protracted period, in the wake of the volcanic eruption in Iceland.

European Transport Commissioner VP Kallas's communication, recommending compensation for airlines for losses sustained as a direct result of the closure of airspace, now needs to be acted upon by states promptly and in an equitable manner. Compensation for airlines must be limited to the actual losses they incurred and not used as a cover for further support by states of ailing carriers.

Included in the compensation must be the significant outlays incurred by airlines, honouring their obligations to assist passengers, whose flights were cancelled, in accordance with current provisions of EC Regulation 261/2004 – Air Passenger Rights.

John Hanlon, Secretary General of ELFAA said:

"The events of the closure of airspace for almost one week demonstrate clearly that Regulation 261/2004 is inappropriate to cover such circumstances. Conceived to penalise isolated bad practices by airlines, such as the cancellation for commercial reasons of individual flights and denied boarding due to overbooking, it patently cannot be applied to natural disasters, which, in this case, led to the cancellation of over 100,000 flights and disruption for millions of passengers – a situation of which the airlines were as innocent as the affected passengers. Regulation 261/2004 is due for review and must be urgently amended to eliminate such aberrant application."

Notes to the editor:

ELFAA represents the fastest-growing European airline sector, its members carry over 160 million passengers a year and accounting for over 35% of scheduled intra-European traffic.

Today, ELFAA comprises 10 airline members which include: Blue Air, easyJet, Flybe, Jet2.com, Norwegian, Ryanair, SverigeFlyg, transavia.com, vueling and Wizz Air.

ELFAA's primary objective is to ensure that European policy and legislation promote free and equal competition to enable the continued growth and development of low fares into the future, thereby allowing a greater number of people to travel by air.



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For further information, please contact:

Jessica Adkins

ELFAA Press Office - Grayling

T. +32 (0) 2 50 49 001

M. +32 (0) 4 75 79 1233

E. press@elfaa.com

Register at www.elfaa.com

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