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Europe's Low-fares Airlines Condemn Injunction against Brussels Low-Cost Terminal

Brussels – 22 June 2009. Europe's low fares airlines today joined forces to call upon legacy airlines to drop a lawsuit against the opening of a low-cost facility at Brussels Zaventem Airport.

In a recently launched court case, some traditional airlines represented by the Belgian Air Transport Association (BATA) as well as two other professional associations (BAR and AOC) claim that they had not been consulted properly and argue that the project should not be realised. The Brussels low-cost terminal was planned to open in October 2009, by converting an already-existing terminal, which is currently totally redundant, following the opening of the new A finger. This timetable has now been put in jeopardy, due to an injunction which, despite the considerable investment already made, prevents the airport continuing with the development of the facility.

This is the more difficult to understand as - consistent with the low fares' sector's appetite for competition - the new terminal will be available to all carriers, which elect to use it. A number of traditional airlines have, in fact, expressed possible interest in operating from it.

John Hanlon, Secretary General of the European Low Fares Airline Association (ELFAA), said:

"Low-fares airlines already account for more than a third of the European air transport market and nearly all of the growth over the past five years. As airlines are becoming more specialised and forward-looking, so airports are adapting to a changing market by offering dedicated facilities to different types of airlines."

"Some legacy carriers are trying to prevent a legitimate project simply to keep out unwanted competition and to uphold an outdated, one-size fits all system, under which low-fares airlines effectively subsidise a few traditional carriers. Low-fares airlines use airport infrastructure much more effectively and allow an airport to grow its passenger numbers, thereby creating much-needed jobs at the airport and in the wider economy. They do not require provision of many of the expensive features at airports, which traditional carriers insist on, and should not be made to cross-subsidise them."



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NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

ELFAA airline members include: clickair, easyJet, flybe, Jet2.com, Myair.com, Norwegian, Ryanair, Sky Europe, Sverige Flyg, transavia.com and Wizz Air.

ELFAA airline members carry approximately 150 million passengers every year, using a combined fleet of some 500 of the most technologically-advanced, environmentally-efficient aircraft.

Low fares airlines currently account for over 35% of scheduled intra-European traffic.

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