



MONDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2008

'Black Monday' for air transport in Poland as CAO approves unjustified navigation charges of 888 PLN

Warsaw – 15 December 2008. The European Low Fares Airline Association (ELFAA) strongly criticised today's decision of the Polish Civil Aviation Office (CAO) to allow high costs and inefficiency at the Polish Air Navigation Services Agency (PANSa) to continue, and to maintain an artificial division of the Polish territory into two charging zones for terminal navigation services: Warsaw and all other airports. This policy results in an exorbitant level of charges at the regional airports, 888 PLN, while continuing to provide a competitive advantage to Warsaw with a lower charge of 610 PLN.

Commenting on CAO's decision, John Hanlon, Secretary General of ELFAA, said:

"Today's decision fails to address the fundamental problem of air navigation services in Poland – high costs and inefficiency in the operation of PANSa. In January 2008 terminal navigation charges in Szczecin, Bydgoszcz, Poznań, Wrocław, Łódź and Rzeszów increased by 960%, and in Gdańsk, Kraków and Katowice by 388%. This led to an overall increase in the cost of air navigation services to ELFAA members in the region of €8 million per annum. Despite repeated calls from ELFAA, the regional airports and the Polish Parliament, PANSa and CAO failed to introduce any cost savings and efficiencies that would guarantee a meaningful reduction in charges for 2009.

Today is also a sad moment for air passengers in Poland. The Polish air transport market is already suffering from the global economic recession and an unprecedented industry crisis, leading to less choice for passengers. Traffic growth has significantly slowed down this year and, with PANSa's and CAO's decision to further disadvantage Polish regional airports, the outlook for 2009 is very uncertain. ELFAA has consistently called for a single charging zone, encompassing all airports in Poland, in line with the examples of Germany, The Netherlands, Portugal and Austria, and also in accordance with relevant provisions of EU law. This would guarantee a better future for air transport in Poland and lower prices for consumers. We fail to understand the reasons behind PANSa's and CAO's decision to follow an alternative route.

ELFAA will continue highlighting inefficiency and abusive pricing policies by air navigation service providers. We are calling on the Minister for Infrastructure to undertake a full and proper investigation of the operation of PANSa and CAO, and the impact of their decisions on the competitiveness of the Polish air transport market."



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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 will carry over 150 million passengers in 2008, 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 and over 50% of traffic in Poland.

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