



news

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ELFAA reacts to Chirac's comments on development aid

Brussels – 27th July, 2005 – The European Low Fares Airlines Association (ELFAA) today criticised French President Jacques Chirac's comments concerning a levy on airline tickets to finance extra aid for Africa. Mr. Chirac called for a €10 billion per annum fund, paid for through increased air ticket prices, for "campaigns against diseases in Africa" particularly "financing the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and Malaria." These proposals have failed to gain the support of the European Commission and the vast majority of other EU Member States.

Commenting on President Chirac's comments, President of ELFAA and Commercial Director of Sterling, Stefan Vilner, said:

"Although President Chirac's comments regarding the need for additional resources to fight disease in Africa are absolutely true, we fail to see any connection between this laudable goal and aviation, which in Europe is already among the most highly taxed sectors and is currently struggling with record high oil prices and intense competition in the market. President Chirac needs to realise that air travel within Europe is no longer reserved mainly for the rich but has become a commodity. Increasing the tax burden on airlines will only result in higher ticket prices, thereby denying the most price sensitive passengers the opportunity to travel by air. This will also have a negative impact on the competitiveness of the European economy."

"If the plan is to fund programmes to fight disease in Africa, surely there are a number of luxury goods that should be the target for President Chirac's plans, for example champagne, sports cars, etc., instead of targeting ordinary air travellers. Having failed to secure enough funding for development aid in their national budgets, some European policy makers now risk destroying European aviation with these repeated attempts to further tax this crucial sector."

NOTE TO THE EDITORS:

ELFAA Members include: Air Berlin, flybe, Hapag-Lloyd Express, Norwegian, Sky Europe, Ryanair, Sterling, Sverige Flyg, Transavia and wizzair.

Low fares services in Europe currently account for approximately 24% of scheduled air services with ELFAA members carrying approximately 60 million passengers to over 200 destinations.

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