

PRESS RELEASE

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Rue du Luxembourg 3
1000 Brussels - Belgium
Tel +49 172 424 0381

aage.duenhaupt@a4e.eu
www.a4e.eu

A4E calls on European Union to make 2017 the real year of delivery

- Governments should abolish aviation taxes which have fleeced passengers by more than €5.6 billion last year.
- European Commission must reform the Airport Charges Directive and tackle the damaging effects of Air Traffic Control (ATC) strikes.
- Carsten Spohr follows Carolyn McCall as new A4E Chair.

On the occasion of its first Annual General Meeting and the launch of the A4E Aviation Summit A4E, member airline CEOs met with European policymakers and industry stakeholders in Brussels.

“Looking back on the first year following the launch of the Commission’s Aviation Strategy, Europe hasn’t reached the necessary flight level to fully unleash the potential of the single aviation market. Unreasonable aviation taxes, high airport charges and disrupted travel plans by ATC strikes are penalising passengers and undermining Europe’s economic growth and jobs”, said Thomas Reynaert, Managing Director of A4E.

European passengers’ rights must be protected during ATC strikes

In 2016 - a year of record **ATC strikes** - A4E launched its largest campaign to keep Europe’s skies open. A4E urges the Commission to protect the right of European travellers and work together with Member States, Air Navigation Service Providers, unions and other stakeholders to minimise the impact on passengers. Strikes should be the last step not the first one and the Commission must take immediate action and lead on an issue that affects the whole of Europe. **41 strike days in 2016** have pushed the overall number of strike days since 2010 to 217 accounting for over 35,000 cancelled flights and more than 7 million minutes of delay.

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Aviation taxes: €5.6 billion paid by European passengers in 2016

Aviation taxes continue to hinder economic growth and jobs in Europe. In **2016**, passengers paid **€5.6 billion** to Europe's leading aviation tax collectors named as the UK, Germany, Italy, France and Austria. Last month Sweden proposed legislation for a new tax to begin in 2018. "Both evidence and economic facts show that removing aviation taxes is beneficial. Countries which have scrapped them have seen an immediate boost in air transport and tourism which has benefited their economies. While Scotland and Italy have taken steps in the right direction there is still a long way to go in the UK as a whole and Germany. The European Commission has acknowledged that aviation taxes may negatively impact connectivity and competitiveness and it has committed to publish a tax inventory to assess their effect on the economy. We call on the European Commission to boost Europe's competitiveness by supporting the abolition of these damaging taxes", said Reynaert.

Airport Charges Directive in focus in 2017

Last year in Amsterdam A4E revealed that charges at the largest European airports have increased by 80 per cent over the last 10 years while airlines reduced average ticket prices by 20 per cent. "We need a clear Commission commitment to **review the Airport Charges Directive** and this must happen in 2017. The Directive hasn't achieved its objectives of greater transparency, user consultation, and non-discrimination", explained Reynaert.

"We have launched A4E to promote the interests of more than 900 million European passengers to ensure they continue to benefit from lower fares and more choices", added Reynaert. "Beyond the economic contribution of air transport it's also important to highlight its **social and cultural value** for Europe. Policymakers in Brussels and across the continent need to ensure that the political conditions will enable us to provide the **best connectivity** to the benefit of all Europeans and a continuous positive development of **Europe's tourism sector**".

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“Lastly, after twelve successful months of growth it is my pleasure to thank **Carolyn McCall**, CEO of easyJet, for chairing the first year of A4E and ensuring that 14 airline groups have a new strong voice in Europe. From today, **Carsten Spohr**, CEO of Lufthansa, will preside over the A4E Steering Board and I am looking forward to jointly launching new policy campaigns to the benefit of European travellers and to increase the competitiveness of European airlines”, concluded Reynaert.

Note to Editors:

Aviation taxes revenues figures:

[http://airlinesuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/BATA-Air-
Passenger-Duty-Final-Report-March-16.pdf](http://airlinesuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/BATA-Air-
Passenger-Duty-Final-Report-March-16.pdf)

[http://www.bdl.aero/media/filer_public/30/24/30246e5e-0cbf-4d79-
aaa8-c1fe66132dbc/grafiken_jahresbilanz_pk_2016_1100px_11a.png](http://www.bdl.aero/media/filer_public/30/24/30246e5e-0cbf-4d79-
aaa8-c1fe66132dbc/grafiken_jahresbilanz_pk_2016_1100px_11a.png)

[https://www.bmf.gv.at/budget/das-
budget/Monatserfolg_Dezember_2016.pdf?5sjnpg](https://www.bmf.gv.at/budget/das-
budget/Monatserfolg_Dezember_2016.pdf?5sjnpg)

About A4E:

Airlines for Europe (A4E) is Europe’s largest airline association, based in Brussels. Launched in January 2016, the association consists of Aegean, airBaltic, Air France KLM, Cargolux, easyJet, Finnair, Icelandair, International Airlines Group (IAG), Jet2.com, Lufthansa Group, Norwegian, Ryanair, TAP Portugal and Volotea, and plans to grow further. With more than 550 million passengers on board each year, A4E members account for more than 70 per cent of the continent’s journeys, operating more than 2,700 airplanes and generating more than EUR 100 billion in annual turnover.