

President of the European Commission, Ms Ursula von der Leyen
Executive Vice-President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy, Stéphane Séjourné
Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, Mr Maroš Šefčovič

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Executive Vice-President for a Clean Just and Competitive Transition, Ms Teresa Ribera
Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth, Mr Wopke Hoekstra

By email

Brussels, 8 June 2026

Dear President von der Leyen, Dear EVP Séjourné, Dear Commissioner Šefčovič,

As the CEOs of Europe's largest airline groups, we are writing jointly to express our serious concerns regarding the upcoming revision of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) and its application to aviation, and to urge the European Commission to take swift and pragmatic action.

European airlines remain committed to net-zero by 2050. The EU policy framework must match that ambition with maintaining competitiveness and must support the transition. It must ensure that flying remains accessible to all and that Europeans remain connected to each other and to the world.

1. Extending the scope of EU ETS endangers the competitiveness of EU aviation

We strongly oppose any partial or full extension of the EU ETS geographical scope. Expanding EU carbon pricing to extra-EEA flights will further penalise European passengers and businesses by increasing the cost of airfare and cargo. It will shift passengers, cargo and carbon to non-EU carriers and hubs and undermine the competitiveness of EU-based carriers.

It risks retaliatory measures and broader trade friction, as the 2011 experience made clear - at a time when the EU can least afford to strain its key partnerships. A unilateral EU approach to climate policy, instead of the globally agreed Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), undermines global decarbonisation efforts and Europe's wider trade and diplomatic objectives. We echo the position of the UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) that any scope extension must be taken off the table.

2. Bring ETS costs in line with CORSIA to protect EU competitiveness

The upcoming EU ETS reform must bring down costs for European passengers. The current cost differential between the EU ETS and CORSIA and the price volatility are untenable. A4E member airlines paid €2.3 billion in ETS costs in 2024, and a projected €5 billion by 2030 - costs that our non-European competitors and passengers in other parts of the world simply do not bear. When combined with the cost of ReFuelEU, EU airlines face the highest decarbonisation costs of any transport sector, as the Draghi report confirmed.

ETS revenues must be channelled back into SAF offtake agreements and investment in aircraft, engine and air traffic management technologies where Europe has a global industrial lead. The premium cost of aviation achieving net zero stands at €1.3 trillion - airlines and our customers cannot shoulder this cost alone and our ETS contribution should finance our green transition.

We ask the Commission to bring ETS costs down in line with CORSIA levels, by extending and increasing EU incentives through the SAF allowances.

3. Global challenges require global solutions

Any extension of EU ETS will hamper the legitimacy of CORSIA. If the EU wants to show global climate leadership, it should invest in reinforcing the ICAO CORSIA framework. This is a first of its kind, sector-specific solution that delivers broader emissions coverage globally in the long-term and creates a level playing field on carbon pricing, supporting the global competitiveness of the European aviation sector. A unilateral European approach would undermine confidence in this unique multilateral scheme, supported by all EU Member States.

We count on your leadership to ensure the EU ETS supports our sector's decarbonisation and facilitates a smooth transition to a strengthened global CORSIA, to successfully reduce aviation emissions around the world.

Sincerely,



Dimitris Gerogiannis
Aegean Airlines CEO



Erno Hildén
AirBaltic CEO



Benjamin Smith
Air France-KLM Group
CEO



Richard Forson
Cargolux President
& CEO



Kenton Jarvis
easyJet CEO



Turkka Kuusisto
Finnair CEO



Luis Gallego
IAG Group CEO



Bogi Nils Bogason
Icelandair CEO



Steve Heapy
Jet2 CEO



Carsten Spohr
Lufthansa Group CEO



Geir Karlsen
Norwegian CEO



Michael O'Leary
Ryanair Group CEO



Luís Rodrigues
TAP Air Portugal CEO



Marco Ciomperlik
TUI Chief Airline Officer



Carlos Muñoz
Volotea CEO