



news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 15th April 2005

ELFAA Complains to the Commission Regarding Latest Illegal State Aid to Alitalia

Brussels – April 15th, 2005 – The European Low Fares Airline Association (ELFAA) today lodged a formal complaint with DG Transport concerning a Decree published by the Italian Government that forces airlines operating out of Italy (and their passengers) to fund the redundancies and retraining of Alitalia personnel arising out of the proposed restructuring of Alitalia. ELFAA has already complained to the Commission regarding the proposed restructuring, which involves a further approximate €3 billion in unlawful state aid to the terminally ill national airline.

Commenting on the Italian Government's latest attempt to prop up Alitalia, Secretary General for ELFAA, Jan Skeels, said:

"This Decree is illegal under Article 87 of the EC Treaty as it is an aid granted through state resources to the national carrier, which will further distort competition in the Italian market. The Decree is designed to fund the redundancies and retraining of Alitalia personnel under the Italian Government's restructuring proposals. Moreover, the Italian Government is forcing other airlines operating in Italy to fund this illegal state aid through the imposition of a per passenger tax.

We are calling on the European Commission to immediately intervene in this latest and blatant attempt of the Italian Government to protect its national airline at the cost of other airlines and their passengers operating in the Italian market."

NOTE TO THE EDITORS:

ELFAA Members include: Air Berlin, flybe, Hapag-Lloyd Express, Norwegian, Ryanair, Sky Europe, 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.

Current Press Office: Phone +49 511 5900 500 Fax +49 511 5900 509