



ECA
Piloting Safety

Press Release

European Pilots Join Coalition for Fair Competition in Aviation

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The European Cockpit Association (ECA), representing over 38.000 European pilots, is announcing its support for “[Europeans for Fair Competition](#)” (E4FC), a coalition, dedicated to restoring a level playing field for European aviation vis-a-vis state-sponsored Gulf carriers.

In the past decade, state-sponsored airlines from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have massively expanded their capacity on many of the routes previously serviced by European carriers. The problem with this capacity-dumping is that these airlines are (partly) state-owned, supported by state aid, benefitting from access to cheap (airport) infrastructure, fuel and capital. Such market distorting practices are detrimental not only to the aviation industry, its employees, and direct connectivity for passengers, but also harms the wider EU economy.

“Everyone should be bound to play by the same rules”, says ECA President Dirk Polloczek. “And yet, over the past decade, the three Gulf airlines have collectively received €39 billion in unfair benefits from their governments, as a recent in-depth investigation showed. It is therefore no surprise that these cash-rich airlines can afford to easily finance their excessive and detrimental growth strategy. What is alarming is that all this comes directly at the expense of the European aviation and its employees, who are following strict state-aid and fair competition rules and who do not have access to unlimited funds. Europe needs to take urgent action and stop this to safeguard the future of our industry and the employment it generates in Europe.”

The goal of the E4FC coalition is to raise awareness for the urgent need to restore fair competition, to end the Middle East airline subsidies and to expose airlines violating the international agreements and competition and trade rules.

“600 European-based jobs are lost for every long-haul route abandoned as a result of the predatory expansion of a Gulf carrier”, says Philip von Schöppenthau, ECA Secretary General. “The threat is real, it is happening now, and needs action quickly. We will work closely with national governments, the European Commission and other stakeholders to end this unprecedented and harmful market distortion.”

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For more information see: [ECA submission to the US Department of State](#) & [ECA Statement at European Parliament Hearing](#)

Note to editors: ECA is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 38.000 pilots from across Europe. Website: www.eurocockpit.be