# EUROPEAN AIRLINE GROUP WANTS LOWER EU AIRPORT FEES

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**A newly launched European airline association wants the European Union to reform its regulations to bring down the cost of using airports in the region.**

Airlines for Europe, or A4E, founded by IAG, Air France-KLM, easyJet, Lufthansa and Ryanair, said a new study showed that charges at the largest 21 European airports have risen 80 percent since 2005, with a 90 percent increase at the 10 biggest.

That compares with a 20 percent drop in ticket prices over the same period, according to IATA data.

"We urge the EU to take action lowering the cost of the EU's airports by ensuring that monopoly airports are effectively regulated by reforming the Airport Charges Directive," A4E said.

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Airlines for Europe brings Europe's full-service and low-cost carriers together for the first time and was formed after IAG left the main lobby group for full-service airlines, the Association of European Airlines.

A4E will focus on getting Brussels, which unveiled plans for the aviation industry in December, to ease the burden on airlines from what they see as additional costs related to fragmented air traffic control, taxes and other levies.

At a conference in Dublin this week, IAG chief executive Willie Walsh criticised airport charges. He has also said a much-debated proposal to expand British Airways' main hub London Heathrow is far too expensive.

"We need to have effective costs at airports. If you look at how airlines have transformed their cost base and pricing, from the consumer point of view, airports have gone in the opposite direction," Walsh said.

Transport politicians and aviation executives will meet on Thursday in Amsterdam to discuss the proposals made under the EU aviation package.

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