

EN  
E-000035/2019  
Answer given by Ms Bulc  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(14.3.2019)

The liberalisation of the access to internal air transport market was accompanied by the historic rise of the low-cost carriers (such as Ryanair) and the consolidation of the full-service network carriers. This process, combined with the effects of widely spread air services agreements with third countries, has led to increased competition between air carriers. This has fuelled significant growth in overall passenger numbers, unprecedented choice in terms of routes and flight frequencies, as well as continuous downward pressure on the average air ticket fares.

In parallel, the development of the business nature of EU airports has been decided by Member States. This includes concession agreements for the management of publicly-owned airports, as the one the Honourable Member mentions in his question.

As regards the charges perceived by the individual Greek airports referred to in the question, the Commission would like to recall that the implementation of the concession agreement with Fraport for a group of 14 Greek airports – including Thessaloniki and Kavala – is supervised by the Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority. Furthermore, the same authority is in charge with the management and operation of the other two airports - Alexandroupolis and Ioannina.

Concerning the specific incident mentioned in the question, the Commission services have immediately contacted the National Enforcement Body (NEB) competent for the enforcement of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 on air passenger rights<sup>1</sup>. Since the flight originated in London, the competent authority is the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority and their investigation is still on-going.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation or long delay of flights, and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 295/91, OJ L 46, 17.2.2004, p. 1–8