

Open letter from easyJet pilots based in France to Mr Stelios Haji-Ioannou shareholder-founder

Dear Stelios,

You who created this beautiful company,
You who invented the concept of "low cost" quality,
You who have ensured that every employee feels considered and respected so that he offers the best of himself to every passenger,
You who have never compromised with flight safety by explaining to shareholders who complained about the cost of flight safety:

"Do you think that flight safety is expensive? Try an accident!"

You who have always had a vision and an innovative eye,
See what successive leaders have done to your airline...

...A machine in which the employee is reduced to an adjustable variable, a cost and the passenger, simply there for profit.

The commercial teams are selling a schedule that flight operations cannot sustain because the many "LEAN" cost reduction plans are turning against us. Today, we have suppliers who can no longer honour contracts, due to cost reductions. Sadly, it is the customer who finds themselves the victim of this tightening spiral, with daily cancellations of flights, handling agents who do not know how to answer them, never mind find them a hotel room. When our customers come to blows, like at Nice airport a few days ago, it is physical demonstration that a final stage of exasperation has been reached.

Crews are pushed to their flight time limits daily, these limits that have now become goals. Pilots are being asked to use their discretionary power to exceed the legal flight time limits to facilitate an unachievable program, to the detriment of passenger and crew safety. The pressure has risen in our headquarters since the passengers understand that they can claim huge compensation in the event of cancellations and delays, according to the new European rules...

As is their right and duty, commanders may refuse to use their discretionary power just like they refuse to exceed industry wide legal time limits. The authority to extend duties are intended to be used only in exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (and if the crew is physically and mentally capable of doing so). There have been instances where Captains have been summoned by the general management in Luton for intimidation when they have used their judgement. Incredible practices when we know that this concept of "discretion" of the commander is not designed to allow companies to sell more flights at lower cost, but to allow passengers to arrive at destination despite the disruption on the day. When a legal standard, established to be used sparingly, becomes systematic, there is a final threshold there.

Departures			
easyJet	17:20	Marseille	EZY8725 Next info at 19:00
easyJet	17:35	Murcia	EZY8553 Go to gate 106
easyJet	17:45	Malta	EZY8825 Boarding 109
easyJet	17:55	Belfast	EZY837 Delayed to 19:55
easyJet	18:00	Berlin	EZY8215 Gate closes 18:17 105
easyJet	18:00	Paris CdG	EZY8327 Delayed to 20:48
easyJet	18:00	Palma Mallorca	EZY8633 Boarding 50
easyJet	18:05	Venice	EZY8069 Delayed to 20:20
easyJet	18:20	Zurich	EZY8117 Delayed to 19:35
easyJet	18:20	Nice	EZY8359 Delayed to 19:30
Thomson	18:20	Dalaman	TOM292 Gate closed 53
easyJet	18:30	Milan-Malpensa	EZY8197 Delayed to 19:10
easyJet	18:30	Geneva	EZY8480 Delayed to 20:30
easyJet	18:30	Faro	EZY8929 Go to gate 56
easyJet	18:30	Munich	EZY8985 Go to gate 10
easyJet	18:35	Amsterdam	EZY8881 Delayed to 19:30
easyJet	18:40	Toulouse	EZY8339 Delayed to 19:15
easyJet	18:40	Hamburg	EZY8347 Delayed to 19:40
easyJet	18:40	Basel	EZY8437 Go to gate 10
Thomson	18:40	Palma Mallorca	TOM4444 Gate closes 18:20
Thomson	18:40	Gran Canaria	TOM4496 Gate closes 18:20 5
easyJet	18:45	Bordeaux	EZY8015 Delayed to 20:00

easyJet : a flight schedule becoming unachievable - © all rights reserved

Let's talk about these uncertainties: the energy spent one year ago by the company's Communications Department to convince the stock market and the public that the 3000 cancellations were due to bad weather, air traffic control strikes or even Brexit, challenged our front-line perception of events. We have confirmation this year that there are serious structural problems that undermine our operations.

Among them, the organization of the days of flight: in a sky more overcrowded than ever, where the famous "ATC slots" are commonplace, it is unrealistic to plan every day to the legal limit of hours. We have denounced these pairings of flights that are too "optimistic" for a long time, but the company still ignores the expertise and experience of the crews. The result: you have 8 times more chance of your weekend flight being cancelled this summer.

Rotations and route pairings are longer therefore we are subject to more ATC restrictions (including "slot delays"), this leads to crews hitting legal flight time limits more often, and results in more crews declaring fatigued, exhausted and unfit for operation. This creates delays in finding replacements, delays because the ATC slot is missed, and a vicious circle then continues over several days...

All employees who joined this company did it with the famous "orange spirit", that famous pioneering attitude, in a new concept start up. We do not neglect the need for cost control and front-line teams have it in their blood, but today they all find themselves ill-equipped for battle in the face of passengers due to the decline in service quality, loss of punctuality, the condition of our aircraft and the lack of information.

What about the social climate? In addition to long-term fatigue levels being far too high, since November, employees are experiencing multiple payroll errors each month. The angst in the crew rooms is increasing with more than € 500,000 worth of salaries unpaid just in France. This had to be recovered with the help of union representatives. This comes as no surprise when we see that the understaffed human resources department is now centralized in London and that they are "mere" employees, not experts, with limited skills and decision-making powers. They clearly are unable to manage the situation quickly and effectively, being in fact simple links between Luton and employees based in France. More seriously, in this orange chaos, the teams in charge of schedules do not hesitate to twist the rules in force, with human resources staff lacking in airline training, trying to interfere with the responsibilities of the commanders.

This company was a pioneer of aviation, but today our role is limited to that of barely "following" the rest. Dear Sir, it is our duty to inform you of these themes tarnish the image of easyJet.

Like you, Sir, we do love this business you have created, and every day we are doing everything we can to make it prosper safely. Unfortunately, our current management does not allow us to practice our businesses in serene and safe conditions.

We therefore call upon you to restore the values that have beaten down our image.

The easyJet SNPL

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