

Beat: News

British Airways opposed to any expansion-driven hike in Heathrow fees - CEO

British Airways

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USPA NEWS - The chief executive of British Airways said the airline would oppose any move by its main airport, Heathrow [FERHT.UL], to raise its charges if the London hub is given permission to expand. The British government will decide on whether to build new airport capacity at London's Heathrow or Gatwick.

Airports at some point this month, with the country's busiest airport, Heathrow, in pole position to win the right to grow.

Alex Cruz, the CEO of British Airways, part of International Airlines Group, said that Heathrow should not hike its airport fees to pay for any new runway it builds, echoing comments made by his boss Willie Walsh, the CEO of IAG.

"If we were to get some sort of news that it was going ahead at Heathrow, and Heathrow Airport were to react very quickly saying from Jan. 1 we're going to add 10 pounds (to airport charges), we wouldn't react very well," Cruz told an industry audience on Wednesday.

"We would very much oppose such a move."

Some of the funding for expansion is expected to come from an increase in the per

Departing passenger fees Heathrow charges to airlines, meaning airlines and passengers operating over the coming years could have to pay for infrastructure that they won't be able to use until 2025 at the earliest.

Walsh has previously said that IAG's airlines will look to expand elsewhere if a bigger Heathrow increases its fees.

Cruz added that British Airways, which accounted for three-quarters of IAG's 2015 profit, was not going to leave Heathrow but that the carrier wanted any new infrastructure to be done at a low cost as possible and without higher fees.

"What we would really like to do is work with the government and work with Heathrow Airport to really develop it into what it should be," he said.

Article online:

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