

Stelios furious with board over £139m bid for easyHotel

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By Simon Neville

The board of easyHotel is on collision course with the company's founder, Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, after it recommended that investors should accept an offer for the business.

But Sir Stelios, who still owns 27 per cent of easyHotel through his easyGroup investment company, said he would be rejecting the 95p-a-share offer and urged other shareholders to follow his lead.

The offer from the Luxembourg investment group ICAMAP, which already holds a 38.7 per cent stake in easyHotel, and Ivanhoe Cambridge, a Canadian-based pension fund, is 35 per cent above the shares' closing price as of Friday night.

It values the group, which has 38 hotels in 10 countries, at £138.7m and said the deal would allow easyHotel to expand more quickly to new locations.

The board of easyHotel has recommended shareholders accept the deal, but Sir Stelios (*inset*) could cause problems in scuppering the deal.

He said: "I find the offer from ICAMAP to be very low and I urge all other shareholders to take no action (ie not accept the ICAMAP offer) until the true value and future potential of easyHotel can be evaluated.

"It should be noted ICAMAP themselves paid 110p (per share) only 18 months ago and the stock has been as high as 128p just 15 months ago."

But easyHotel chairman Jonathan Lane said the offer was "fair and reasonable". He added: "If accepted, the

offer should enable the easyHotel group to accelerate its expansion into major European cities where it sees significant opportunity."

