

easyJet founder refers airline to City watchdog over Airbus deal

easyJet's founder has referred the airline to the City watchdog for failing to comply with "the highest standards of disclosure and transparency" in its decision to defer the delivery of 24 aircraft from Airbus.

By Simon Foy

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Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, who has threatened to push out the airline's executives over the Airbus contract and sue them personally, has hired a London law firm to force easyJet to hold a shareholder vote on the new deal.

Last week, the budget airline scaled back its £4.5bn order for 107 planes amid pressure from Sir Stelios and the coronavirus pandemic.

Sir Stelios said:

"The scoundrels at easyJet simply do not have the corporate authority to cut such a deal given the collapsed share price and the monumental size of the Airbus order (c£4.5bn).

"If the [Financial Conduct Authority] does not force them to call a shareholder vote, my company, easyGroup, will not

hesitate to take the regulator to judicial review as the law provides.

"In plain English that means going to a High Court judge to ask for an injunction requiring the regulators to do their job properly."

The Greek-Cypriot billionaire has demanded easyJet preserve cash rather than buying new aircraft because of the virus-induced collapse in air travel.