
Alitalia unions urged 'basic accord' on Air France takeover in 24 hours

By Editor

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ROME, March 31, 2008 (AFP) - Alitalia chairman Maurizio Prato urged unions representing the airline's workforce on Monday to reach a 'basic accord' on Air France-KLM's takeover plan in the next 24 hours, media reports said.

'We have today and tomorrow to see if a basic accord is possible, which I would refer to the board of directors and then we will decide,' Prato said, according to union sources cited by news media.

Alitalia is on the verge of bankruptcy, and Prato had initially set Monday as the deadline for the unions to reach a final decision on the Air France-KLM offer, which will slash 2,100 jobs.

The Alitalia board 'gave me a mandate to continue the discussion with the unions within a short period, to be renewed according to the progress of the negotiations,' Prato reportedly said during a meeting with Air France chief Jean-Cyril Spinetta and union leaders.

Air France-KLM says it will not go forward with the operation to acquire the Italian government's 49.9 percent stake in Alitalia without the approval of the unions.

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