

## EasyJet chief says European airline shakeup is not over

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EasyJet expects to emerge stronger from an ongoing consolidation in Europe's skies

The European aviation sector is likely to see further consolidation after a

number of airline bankruptcies, the new chief executive of British low-cost airline EasyJet said on Wednesday.

"In 2017 we saw the bankruptcy of Monarch, the problems with Alitalia, Air Berlin as well, it is just the sign there will be more change," EasyJet CEO Johan Lundgren told AFP in an interview during the inauguration of the company's sixth French destination in the southwestern city of Bordeaux.

France is EasyJet's second-biggest market after Britain, and the company has already raised its French capacity by six percent this year.

"There is more consolidation to come and I'm convinced EasyJet is part of the companies who will become stronger and stronger," said Lundgren who took over at the airline in December.

"But there will be players who are weak today and who will continue to become weaker and also potentially disappear," he said. "And that is the road I think that the [aviation industry](#) is on."

EasyJet stood ready to participate in the consolidation "as we did with Air Berlin", Lundgren said, referring to EasyJet's purchase of the bankrupt German carrier's operations at Tegel Airport in Berlin.

"We are monitoring the situation in Europe and if the opportunity is right, if it makes commercial sense for us, we will make sure to seize the opportunities," he said.

The airline, which is based at Luton, north of London, in January reported that first quarter revenues jumped more than 14 percent, profiting in part from the collapse of rivals and flight cancellations at Ryanair.

Revenue reached £1.14 billion (\$1.61 billion) in the three months to the end of December, compared with a year earlier.

EasyJet, which carried a company-high of 81.6 million passengers in 2017, is aiming to secure "strong positions in the primary airports", Lundgren said in the interview.

Overall the airline was hoping to occupy the "number one or number two position" in terms of market share.

"Our [market share](#) (in Europe) is still only 10 percent," he said. "That means there are lots of future opportunities to continue on the journey of growth we are on."

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