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By Heather Smith

(Corrects spelling of Exxon Mobil in the first paragraph.)

Dec. 4 (Bloomberg) -- [Exxon Mobil Corp.](#), [Royal Dutch Shell PLC](#), [Chevron Corp.](#), and [Total SA](#) were fined 41.1 million euros (\$52 million) by the French antitrust authority for fixing the price of fuel for certain Air France-KLM Group flights.

The four companies conspired in 2002 to ensure they retained their share of the market for fueling flights during stopovers on Reunion Island, the Paris-based Conseil de la Concurrence said in a [statement](#) today.

"By acting jointly to restrict the volumes offered, they gave Air France no other option but to accept all four offers," the counsel said in the statement on its Internet site.

The investigation showed the practice increased refueling costs for Air France, Europe's biggest airline, on the island by 30 percent in 2002 and 2003, the statement said. The probe, which entailed raids in Paris, Reunion and London, was the first instance of cooperation between the French and the British Office of Fair Trading.

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"Compliance with antitrust rules remains a top priority for management," said Wendel Broere, spokesman for The Hague-based [Royal Dutch Shell](#), Europe's largest oil company, which was fined 10.5 million euros. The company hasn't decided whether to appeal.

[Total](#), Europe's third-largest oil company, was fined 9.9 million euros. Elisabeth de Reals, a spokeswoman for the Paris-based company, said they hadn't yet studied the legal reasoning for the decision and so hadn't decided whether to appeal.

Exxon "acted in an appropriate and legal manner in respect to supplying fuel at the Saint Denis airport on Reunion," said a statement on the Web site for [subsidiary](#) Esso SAF. The unit was fined 10.7 million euros.

A spokesman for Chevron, fined 10 million euros, didn't immediately return calls seeking comment.

To contact the reporter on this story: [Heather Smith](#) in Paris at hsmith26@bloomberg.net.

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