



Brussels, 8 November 2016

## STATEMENT ON THE ATM WORKERS' RIGHTS

**Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), representing together the entire community of European air traffic controllers and other staff in air traffic management, strongly deplore the attacks of Airlines for Europe (A4E) on the rights of ATM workers. The strategy of A4E consists of 2 elements: a "call for action" and a so-called "study" on ATC strikes. This strategy is a direct attack on the fundamental rights of workers which ATCEUC and ETF cannot accept.**

On 12 October 2016, A4E published a press release and an updated study on the economic impact of ATC strikes in Europe. The obvious aim of this study was to insinuate false information and spread it to the decision makers and public opinion. ATCEUC and ETF firmly reject not only the conclusions of this study but also its methodology. Unlike scientific studies, this project has been commissioned to PwC, a consultancy company financially depending on its clients. We have serious doubts on the independence of the chosen expert.

Furthermore, ATCEUC and ETF have now collected evidence that the methodology of the study is flawed and the economic impact has been hugely overestimated. The desired effect is reached as the final figures look impressive. On this false base, A4E has launched its press and communication campaign aiming at the manipulation of the EU Institutions and passengers.

The ATM industry is used to being attacked by Ryanair which usually uses this type of stunt to make free publicity. However, ATCEUC and ETF are disappointed to see that Air France, Lufthansa, British Airways and easyJet have also accepted to play this kind of games.

Strikes are an expression of social difficulties, such as the negative impact of the SES Performance Scheme and have always been called by trade unions as a last resort in case of breakdown or lack of social dialogue. ATCEUC and ETF strongly believe that efforts have to be made to find adequate solutions, at national level, between the concerned parties.

Together with the right to organize and the freedom of assembly, the right to strike belongs to the fundamental collective rights protected by national, European and international legislation.

In the case of air traffic management, the underlying reasons of recent strikes were not only salaries or terms and conditions but also issues purely affecting the safety of passengers linked with staff shortage, pension age or lack of investment. They are mostly the result of the destructive pressure created by the airline industry to the EU Institutions in order to impose unrealistic and excessive performance targets.

**The air traffic management workers represented by ATCEUC and ETF are at the front line of safety. ATCEUC and ETF remain determined to promote the highest level of safety and defend the fundamental rights of ATM workers.**

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