



PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION

FEDERATION EUROPEENNE DES TRAVAILLEURS DES TRANSPORTS

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EU-QATAR DEAL MUST INCLUDE AVIATION WORKERS' RIGHTS

On the eve of the first negotiation round between the EU and Qatar on a horizontal air transport agreement taking place from 19 – 21 September 2016 in Doha, the ETF reiterates its demand that such type of agreements must contribute to a social progress for all aviation workers. Further liberalisation of air transport without proper safeguards can seriously damage the European aviation sector.

Already in December 2015, at the time the European Commission published its "Aviation Strategy for Europe", ETF issued a word of caution on the Commission's intentions to negotiate a number of air transport agreements with key countries and insisted on the prerequisite to address the issue of workers' rights. Qatar never ratified the fundamental ILO conventions and consequently has no freedom of association and negotiation. ETF also opposes any relaxation of current ownership and control rules due to the strategic importance of aviation for the EU. Finally, the Commission is expected to come with a new proposal on how to address unfair competition from third countries.

In its response to the "Aviation Strategy for Europe", ETF underlined the need for global action in the social field. In this respect, **Enrique Carmona**, ETF Civil Aviation Section President, commented: *"The ETF and ITF have been advocating the need for binding global employment standards. These will ensure that unfair competition based on the absence of workers' rights cannot take place. Therefore the EU should insist on close cooperation between ILO and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) when defining the labour law jurisdiction, labour and social standards, as well as ensure proper enforcement."*

François Ballestero, ETF Political Secretary for Civil Aviation, added: *"ETF will continue its fight for fair aviation in Europe with equal opportunities for all workers, and a strong social clause in all agreements between the EU and third countries. Cheaper airfares cannot be the sole goal, we also need to maintain and create quality jobs, retain high safety levels, ensure respect for workers' rights and prevent unfair competition."*

ETF remains committed to its fight against social dumping and campaigns for decent life for aviation workers in Europe and globally. As one of the EU stakeholders, ETF will do the utmost to closely monitor the progress of the negotiations and expects to be directly consulted by the Commission on the issues with impact on workers. ETF affiliates will contact their individual Member States on such important negotiations.

For more information, please contact François Ballestero, ETF Political Secretary for Civil Aviation, E-Mail: f.ballestero@etf-europe.org, Mobile: +32 474916979

The ETF represents more than 3.5 million transport workers from more than 230 transport unions and 41 European countries, in the following sectors: railways, road transport and logistics, maritime transport, inland waterways, civil aviation, ports & docks, tourism and fisheries.