



Brussels, 15 May 2014



EUROPEAN COMMISSION SPONSORING LOW COST AIRLINES!

As of 1st April 2014, the European Commission has abandoned its policy to only use International Air Transport Association (IATA) airlines for professional missions and its officials are now obliged to fly low cost airlines. The Commission staff and the European civil aviation employees condemn this approach. They urge the Commission to revise its position and revert to a responsible and ethically defensible policy in this matter.

Commissions' decision to oblige its officials to use airlines with the lowest fares is not only an effort to save taxpayers' money, but unfortunately it also gives an important political signal by endorsing the operating model of those airlines. Both Ryanair and Easyjet, for instance, have been accused several times of non-respect of passenger rights as stipulated by Regulation (EC) 261/2004. For example, Easyjet has been condemned to several fines because it did not accept passengers with special needs. Ryanair on the other hand has recently lost several courtcases raised by its ex-workers for non-respect of labour legislation and unfair dismissal.

François Ballestero, European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) Political Secretary for Civil Aviation and Tourism, commented: *"This decision indicates that the Commission does not care about the enforcement of its own legislation. It gives a clear sign to those 'cowboys' that they can carry on their social dumping practices, now even sponsored by EU money. This is not acceptable for the ETF and we will continue to fight against it."*

Georges Tsolos, Vice-President of Union Syndicale, added: *"It is unacceptable that the Commission grants an 'official supplier' status to an airline that does not treat its passengers and staff properly, this is giving a negative sign to the whole society."*

Therefore, the ETF and Union Syndicale have decided to jointly approach the Commission with a proposal to change its staff travel policy. Furthermore, the ETF will launch a list of FAIRlines that follow principles of decent work and respect workers' rights.

For further information, please contact François Ballestero, ETF Political Secretary, f.ballestero@etf-europe.org or Georges Tsolos, Union Syndicale Vice-President, usb@unionsyndicale.eu

The ETF represents more than 2.5 million transport workers from 243 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.

Union Syndicale is the biggest trade union in the European Public Service. It has its headquarters in Brussels, and its members are drawn from all the European institutions and other organisations. Union Syndicale is the principal and unavoidable negotiator for the EU staff.