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THE RIGHT TO STRIKE IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), representing around 270,000 workers in European aviation, took note of the strong wording used by European airlines' representatives to condemn the actions of French trade unions organising air traffic management (ATM) staff. The ETF would like to reiterate that the right to strike is a fundamental right and therefore non-negotiable. Furthermore, the ETF warns against any attempt to impose minimum level of services in the European ATM sector.

The French unions UNSA and CFDT have resorted to a call for strike actions due to the insufficient staffing and investments. Despite a presumed growth of air traffic in France, the General Directorate for Civil Aviation decided to lower the replacement level for natural attrition from 80 to 65 per cent. Furthermore, in direct contradiction with the EU plans to modernise the sector and increase its efficiency, the investment gap in the French ATM system is growing.

Eduardo Chagas, ETF General Secretary, commented: *"Instead of condemning trade unions for defending their membership by executing legal actions, European airlines should insist on French authorities to invest adequate financial means into their ATM system and staff. The right to strike is anchored in the Article 28 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the ETF will resist any attempt to restrict it."*

In its response to the Aviation Strategy for Europe published by the European Commission in December 2015, the ETF rejected the proposed introduction of minimum service requirements. Instead, the ETF suggests to develop the human factor pillar and enhance social dialogue. Together with the ATM Social Partners, the ETF also published a Toolbox for successful social dialogue which aims at increasing the quality of social dialogue and reducing the risk of conflicts. In line with its main spirit, partnership and cooperation between the parties are key features of a successful social dialogue. The toolbox is available online at <http://bit.ly/1T52v0F>.

For more information, please contact François Ballesterro, ETF Political Secretary for Civil aviation, by e-mail at f.ballesterro@etf-europe.org or by phone at + 32 (0)474 91 69 79.

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.