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European Transport Workers' Federation  
Fédération Européenne des Travailleurs des Transports  
Europäische Transportarbeiter-Föderation  
Federación Europea de los Trabajadores del Transporte

Brussels, 11 March 2020

**Mrs Adina-Ioana Vălean**  
Commissioner for Transport  
European Commission

Dear Commissioner Vălean,

In line with the ETF [statement](#) and [letter](#) last week, we welcome the change to airport slot rules that the European Commission announced yesterday. At the same time, however, I would like to draw your attention to other measures that need to be implemented simultaneously to prevent dire social consequences.

The relaxation of slot rules is an important step to ensure the stability of the airline industry in Europe. If introduced in isolation, however, it fails to address the very real social cost civil aviation workers will pay because of the decline in air travel. In parallel with the changes of rules for airport slots, all EU member states need to ensure that workers whose employment is in danger are protected, in line with the provisions that exist in their national legislation. Concretely, this can mean that workers are put on temporary paid leave while the demand for airline services is low and that they have access to other forms of compensation if – as a measure of last resort – they end up being let go.

At the same time, workers that do not enjoy secure contracts and social benefits that come with it cannot be ignored. Bogus self-employment, for example, makes the protections of many civil aviation workers very limited. Member states need to ensure that those workers are protected as well, and don't pay the price for the cost-saving measures of airlines.

**We urge you to encourage the EU member states to adopt the measures mentioned above to prevent adverse social consequences of the current crisis.** Social measures that are already being introduced in some of the member states need to be extended and implemented in all member states immediately.

Transport has an important societal role and letting it collapse without a contingency plan with a strong social dimension for restoration is highly irresponsible and can have unpredictable consequences. It is unclear how long the crisis will last and when the demand for airline services will return. Governments need to protect the employment of civil aviation workers and support them during the time of a temporary fall in the number of flights.

At the same time, air travel health and safety measures need to be made stronger. **We urge safety authorities such as the European Aviation Safety Agency to make their proposed measures in response to the COVID-19 outbreak binding.** This would not only ensure the highest protection of the health and safety of workers but also strengthen the confidence of passengers and prevent further decline in travel.

Yours sincerely,

Livia Spera  
ETF General Secretary

CC: Mr Filip Cornelis, Director for Aviation, DG MOVE



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