



EUROPEAN TRANSPORT  
WORKERS' FEDERATION

To Nicolas Schmit  
Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights  
European Commission

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Brussels, 14 September 2021

Dear Commissioner Schmit,

As you are aware, the approval of state support to Italian company ITA, and the closure of the existing Alitalia is bringing great concern and worry to the thousands of workers and their families who are dependant on their jobs to sustain their income. Alitalia has traditionally been leading the way in decent working conditions and levels of pay in line with other European flag carriers. Despite its challenges, the economic benefit of Alitalia to those citizens, their families, communities and indeed the Italian economy has been significant and cannot be understated. At a minimum, we and our affiliated Italian unions expect the same from ITA.

Therefore, we are very angry to see the comments from Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager today regarding ITA, which in our view, condemns the good working conditions, and collective bargaining principles established in Alitalia over many decades of hard work from both the workers and employers. The [statement of the Commission](#) reads as if it has had a victory by destroying Alitalia, reducing labour stands and supporting the idea of alternative and potentially precarious labour contracts, something we have campaigned actively against for many years. In short, the statement is disgraceful and is completely unacceptable to any trade union organisation and any European citizen who believes in decent work.

It must be noted, that the comments made in this statement, in particular in relation to labour contracts are being done with no consultation of worker representatives at either European or national level, and in doing so, the Commission has failed in dealing with this matter in a sustainable, fair or transparent way. The Commission clearly states it will support “a significantly reduced number of staff from the market, including from Alitalia, but under new labour contracts, based on market conditions”. We question this proposal, as it seems the Commission has failed to fully understand the nature of the European

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Frank Moreels, President | Livia Spera, Acting General Secretary | Ekaterina Yordanova - Jan Villadsen, Vice Presidents

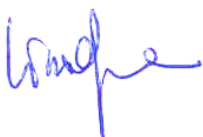
aviation market. There are clearly two types of airlines in Europe, legacy carriers which generally have decent working conditions, and compete in particular for long-haul and business traffic, and low-cost carriers, with generally worse working conditions, competing for the remainder, mostly leisure traffic. ITA has made clear it will compete for the former. Given this, its market competitors are companies such as Air France, Lufthansa, and KLM and therefore we expect similar levels of working conditions to be applied.

I wish to make it abundantly clear that we, alongside our affiliates across Europe, will not, under any circumstances, accept the Commission supporting forms of precarious work, including agency employment, precarious contracts, or an undermining of acceptable pay and labour conditions. It is our view that such an approach would go against the purposes of the European Union to better the lives of its citizens, and instead increase the profits of businesses who have no interest in doing this.

Lastly, the statement makes reference to a more sustainable cost structure, but no reference to a sustainable airline in either the social or environmental sense. The sustainable cost of labour, is not the same as sustainable labour, and sustainability is completely missed in the position of the Commission in this regard. There is nothing sustainable about precarious work and reduced working conditions. The clear priority of the Commission on cost is completely unacceptable, and goes against the strives we as stakeholders, some Member States, and your own Commission are making to ensure a more socially and environmentally sustainable aviation industry in Europe.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you urgently to deal with these issues, but we are now in a position where the Commission must retract its position, and reassess its proposal for ITA with a focus on sustainability, not on a false notion of sustainability which is that of a 'sustainable cost structure'. We expect you and your Commission colleagues to deal with this issue immediately and directly, and look forward to seeing a proposal based on the principles of the Pillar of Social Rights, such as collective bargaining, social dialogue, secure and adaptable employment, and fair working conditions, of which this is not.

Yours Sincerely,



Livia SPERA  
ETF General Secretary

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