

ETF stands in solidarity with its French affiliates calling to block the ratification of the EU agreement with Qatar

Today, the European Transport Workers' Federation stands in solidarity with its French members who are protesting the recent signing of [the Air Service Agreement between Qatar and the European Union](#). The agreement between Qatar and the EU was negotiated in 2019 in a very different time for European aviation. It is our view that now is not a good time for us to further liberalise the industry, and put our members at risk to social dumping from Qatari companies which do not even accept basic worker rights such as freedom of association or the right to strike.

Furthermore, it is our view that the objectives of the European aviation no longer align with what was agreed in 2019, and the agreement in its current form should be scrapped. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a monumental shift in the market and European airlines are no longer in a position to be able to compete on a level-playing field. This is mainly due to the state support provided to Qatar Airways which is not available to European carriers.

In the case of France, we support our affiliates call to block the ratification of the agreement with Qatar, and such calls should be extended across all EU member states. Right now, there is no benefit for European workers in the agreement with Qatar, and the ratification of this agreement only increases the risk of unfair competition and social dumping.

In recent months most European airlines (including Air France) have been required to receive state aid in order to survive this crisis. This state aid is conditional and limited in its nature. In the case of Qatar, Qatar Airways has been receiving unfair and unsustainable state aid for many years which artificially supplement their profits. Now more so than ever we should not support these unfair practices by Qatar, and as such block the ratification of the agreement in Member States.

Alongside our affiliates, we call on the French government to block this agreement as it does not support decent work in French airlines or the European aviation market. It runs the risk of crippling many network carriers, and this is not in the interest of the French state or the French worker.