



Petr Fiala
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

E-mail: sekretariat.ministra@mdcr.cz

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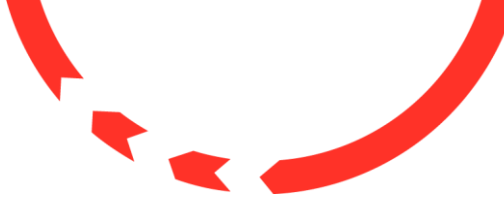
Dear Prime Minister Fiala,

At the recent informal meeting of transport ministers on the 21st of October, several Council members highlighted the need to tackle various issues facing the aviation industry including global competitiveness and decarbonisation. We welcome the initiative from the Council members, and the proposed creation of a 'toolbox' that must include an element addressing the social challenges in aviation.

Across European airports this summer we have seen a critical shortage of workers at airports mostly due to the lack of attractiveness of the sector. This lack of attractiveness is a result of aggressive cost-cutting measures by airlines and employers for the past 25 years, to make the cost of labour as low as possible, reducing both the quality of work, and the quantity of workers available. While the lack of attractiveness of the aviation sector was recognised by both workers and employers in the recent Sectoral Social Dialogue plenary meeting in Brussels, it was also recognised that if no drastic changes are made, then we will again see a repeat of the chaos we have seen in summer 2022.

But our concerns are not limited to airport workers. In the air, cabin crew and pilots are facing increased pressure from globalisation and from the recurrent downturn economic cycles. Every crisis contributes to lowering working conditions, and reducing the attractiveness of their jobs, leading to a loss of skills. National systems are not equipped to address the social challenges of this very mobile workforce, which include the growth of atypical employment, the emergency of new business models such as non-essential wet-leasing and the use of unconventional intermediaries to employ aircrew. Without stable levels of well-trained aircrew, aviation is not sustainable. Therefore, it is our view that a holistic view of the issues facing air crew is needed in order to ensure the sector remains socially sustainable and resilient.

While it may not seem that the ongoing SES2+ recast has the potential to negatively effect social sustainability in the ATM sector, we once again would like to highlight our concerns regarding a number of areas in the proposal, namely the separation of the provision of Aerodrome services, support services, ADSP and the application of market principles to Aerodrome ATS. ATM has uniquely



maintained its operation efficiency during the COVID-19 pandemic as it provided EU citizens with the necessary infrastructure to ensure the adequate and fast movement of critical goods such as masks, vaccines, and essential people across Europe all while accepting pay cuts, freezes and redundancies. It is our view that this was only possible due to the integrated nature of the ATM services and the lack of excessive competition which we see in other sectors of aviation. Our members work to create a green and sustainable aviation industry every day, and we welcome the ambition of the Commission, but there is no obvious benefit for the environment in separating services and forcing the liberalisation on a sector which has proven to operate efficiently and effectively. Similarly, we remain concerned that drastic changes to the ATM funding model under the upcoming revision of performance targets in reference period 4 (RP4) would have a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of the ATM network which has proven to work well in its intended role to provide an efficient and safe service to European citizens and airspace users. While we accept efficiencies can be made, they must not be made at the expense of standards of employment.

Given the ongoing staff shortages in airports, the upcoming revision of the Air Services Regulation (EU 1008/2008), the continued debate surrounding SES2+, and the upcoming revision of performance targets under RP4, now is the time for social matters to take a central role in your consideration and in the toolbox as proposed in your October informal meeting. We remain deeply concerned that if these issues are not addressed quickly and adequately, we will see continued disruption in the aviation industry due to social unrest caused by short-sighted proposals focused on profit and liberalisation. It is worth noting that the approach now being taken by employers and policy makers in the air crew and ATM sectors is what we previously seen with ground handling in 1996. This approach has clearly not worked, and in the long-term, such an approach will be detrimental to workers, citizens, employers, and governments alike. This is a situation we wish to avoid.

Both the ETF and ECA remain open and willing to engage with you, future EU Presidencies and Council Members on the upcoming toolbox, and once again urge you to ensure that social matters are a focus of any discussions on the future of the aviation industry.

Yours Sincerely,



Livia Spera
ETF General Secretary



Philip von Schöppenthau
ECA General Secretary