



# PRESS RELEASE



Brussels, 20 November 2017

## Our Rights – Your Safety

**The Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) have launched today a campaign to oppose the European Commission will to shape and limit the Air Traffic Controllers(ATCOs)' right to strike. Indeed, Commission encroaches the national sovereignty of Member States as the right to strike falls outside the scope of the Treaties.**

The recommendations of the European Commission that are inside the Communication '*Aviation: Open and Connected Europe (COM 2017) 286 final*' dated on 8 June 2017 significantly encroach the national sovereignty of Member States and contradict the Article 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union which clearly states that the right to strike is excluded from EU competencies. Therefore, a joint petition has been launched calling the European Commission:

- to respect the ATCOS' rights enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental rights
- to refrain from any actions restricting these rights.

**This petition is available online at: [www.atcorights.org](http://www.atcorights.org)**

**Charles-André Quesnel**, Chair of the ETF Air Traffic Management Committee, commented: "*The Commission directly interferes with the exclusive competence of the Member States on this issue. This Communication seeks to reduce ATCO's ability to defend themselves and to diminish their capacity to raise their voice to maintain and improve the safety of the European sky.*"

The aviation sector is a very sensitive industry based on a high level of professionalism and complex technology. By attacking air traffic controllers, the balance of the whole aviation chain could be put at risk.

**Volker Dick**, ATCEUC President, added: "*The right to workers' representation and collective action are enshrined in the founding Treaties of the European Union and evidence shows that free and independent trade unions make a net positive contribution to productivity, competitiveness as well as safety. This Communication is affecting the right to strike, in full contradiction with the spirit and the content of the European Commission's initiative for a Social Pillar and the willingness to build up the 'triple-A social Europe'.*"



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The best approach to prevent conflicts and promote good relations is to establish a constructive social dialogue. For this reason, ATCEUC and ETF have developed jointly with the European ATM employers' organisation CANSO a 'Toolbox for Successful Social Dialogue'. Instead of attacking fundamental workers' rights, a positive cooperation and a genuine dialogue are needed to sustain the EU growth and the Single European Sky, ensure safe flights and create quality jobs in aviation.

**François Ballestero**, ETF Political Secretary for Civil Aviation, concluded: *"None of the recommendations are referring to practices in Member States in which there is no intervention of the legislator and where there is no strike. The practices used by the Commission show its intention to intervene on a matter which is not of its competence. We are confident that our petition will be largely supported!"*



[www.atcorights.org](http://www.atcorights.org)

For questions or further information, please contact François BALLESTERO (ETF), [f.ballestero@etf-europe.org](mailto:f.ballestero@etf-europe.org), or Jean-Denis LARRERE (ATCEUC), [larrere@atceuc.org](mailto:larrere@atceuc.org).

Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC) was created in 1989 and is currently composed of 32 professional and autonomous trade unions representing more than 14000 Air Traffic Controllers and Air Traffic Safety Engineering Personnel throughout Europe. ATCEUC is a recognized social partner in air traffic management.

European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) represents more than 5 million transport workers and among them 386,000 civil aviation workers from 81 trade unions located in 42 European countries. We are a recognized social partner and the only representative of aviation workers across all sub-sectors (air traffic management, aircrew, ground handling, maintenance, etc.).