



Brussels, 26 September 2017

AIRLINES CAUSE ONE MILLION MINUTES OF DELAY WHILE BLAMING OTHERS

The undersigned ATM Professional Staff Organisations note with great regret yet another attack of Airlines for Europe (A4E) on the European Air Traffic Management in the form of a joint letter of A4E member airlines' CEOs to the European Air Navigation Service providers (ANSPs). The letter enumerates a number of ATM-related issues as cause for the delays. We understand that delays and lack of capacity might be frustrating but every day ANSPs and their staff are doing the utmost to deliver safe and quality services to airlines and their passengers.

While recognising the constraints we as professional staff representatives believe that Europe should be proud of its ATM system. Given the different cultural and national backgrounds it is remarkable that we have been able to build a cooperative system that delivers such an incredibly high level of safety and efficiency. A4E, on the contrary, is very selective in terms of the numbers they portray as hard facts, demonstrating a self-centred point of view only directed at profit margins rather than at offering true benefits for the European citizens.

As cited in our joint report entitled *Efficiency, capacity and growth in European aviation – Why industrial action in ATM is not the issue*¹ published in March 2017, the airlines themselves are actually the cause of over half (!) of all the delays. In July 2017 delays caused by airlines have accounted to 1 million minutes, a fact airlines prefer to conceal.

For instance, one airline in the UK recently used a non-existent ATC strike as a reason for not paying EU compensation, when in fact they were directly attributable for the delay. Another major budget airline from Ireland and A4E member is currently drawing large media attention for a high number of last-minute flight cancellations without showing any respect for their stranded passengers. ATM, together with the whole aviation community, can only continue to improve and promote transparency and responsible attitudes as their core values.

Therefore, the undersigned ATM professional staff organisations:

- **urge the Commission to seek a broader spectrum of opinions as the Single European Sky process moves forward rather than a subset of loud, well-funded stakeholders;**
- **calls on A4E to stop its disgraceful media campaign against the European Air Traffic Management System and instead engage in a meaningful dialogue with the organisations concerned.**

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¹ for the full report see <http://bit.ly/2rY9kdk>