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## PRESS RELEASE

SNCTA, the biggest French air traffic controllers trade union, strongly denounces airlines misinformation disseminated to passengers regarding flights delays causes.

Over the past few months, there has been disinformation about flight delays and strikes of air traffic controllers. These messages have become increasingly frequent over the last few weeks in coincidence with new summer flight schedules.

**Contrary to recent in-flight and airport announcements, as well as statements to the social media, French air traffic controllers are not currently on strike.**

Official reports remind us that airlines themselves are the first to be blamed for flight delays (source : *Eurocontrol – CODA Digest 2018*). This report also mentions that half of these delays are due to reactionary delays throughout the day. The situation is getting worse today with the latest decisions of airlines to shorten turnaround times when time, at security and customs control, has been increased. By spreading misinformation on the real cause of flight delays, one may wonder if airlines are not misleading their unsatisfied customers in order to discharge their responsibilities and to avoid passengers rightful compensation. Which would be unacceptable.

SNCTA does not deny delays caused by air navigation service providers. Quite the contrary, as, for several years now, SNCTA has warned decision makers and public authorities of this issue linked to network capacity shortage in relation with outdated control systems and proven short staffing. There has been a continuous decrease in the number of French air traffic controllers over the past few years, when at the same time air traffic has been on a substantial increase (+19% overflights in 3 years).

Safety being the prime mission of air traffic controllers, they cannot handle more planes in the air than the system can take into account. In such a case, planes wait safely on the ground.

Air traffic controllers are not on strike. Quite the opposite, they ensure a public service twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, with poor technical equipment and understaffing. They are weary of these smear campaigns while they guide as efficiently as possible a continuously increasing number of flights.

SNCTA asserts that spreading this fake news strongly undermines the profession of air traffic controller. SNCTA invites airlines to correct their announcements.

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