



*"[air navigation control, [...] is a task involving the exercise of public authority and is not of an economic nature, since that activity constitutes a service in the public interest which is intended to protect both the users of air transport and the populations affected by aircraft flying over them".
(Extract of decision C.364/92 of the European Court of Justice).*

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PRESS RELEASE

17th of July 2018, Brussels

ATCEUC welcomes the statement on European Aviation published by Violeta Bulc, EU Commissioner for Transport and Karima Delli, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism. ATCEUC too would like the Commission, the European Parliament and ANSPs to be bold in their vision for aviation and air traffic management in Europe.

However, it is remarkable and ironic that this statement completely neglects any recognition of the role that both the Commission and Parliament have had in bringing ATM to its current situation.

The brutality of legislation around the economic regulation of ANSPs in the previous period has disabled investment in both equipment and people. Therefore, the years 2020-2024 would be crucial for the recovery of the ATM industry. The cost cutting policy should be urgently stopped. Since 2008, most of ANSPs across the continent ceased recruiting enough student controllers. The worsening of the conditions of employment for Air Traffic Controllers (ATCOs) and Air Traffic Service Electronics Personnel (ATSEP) has seen many of our colleagues leave for other opportunities. Furthermore, ANSPs are finding it increasingly difficult to even recruit new entrants because of the concerted attack on our professions by some lobby airlines organisations. **Populist attacks against ATCOs should be stopped and the professional engagement of ATCOs should be recognised.**

Important orientations will be discussed in the coming months regarding the period 2020-2024. While a majority of European States is now opposed to a continuation of the cost cutting policy started in 2008, on the contrary, the PRB, the European body in charge of advising the Commission, still proposes a drastic reduction of up to 24% of the unit rate for this period. **To recover from the difficulties, ATCEUC recommends a reasonable increase of ANSPs costs of 5% for the period 2020-2024.**

Until very recently, the representative professional bodies of air traffic controllers were excluded and invisible in the decision-making processes in regard to ATM and its future development. A tool box for successful social dialogue in ATM (sponsored by the Commission for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) exists on paper but is not acted on by our employers all around EU. Therefore, it is no surprise that unions are increasingly driven to take drastic action. European Commission Expert group on human dimension has also been created to start the implementation of the social pillar of the Single European Sky. **These efforts at the European level are pointing in the right direction and must be increased.**



In her social media response to commentary on the joint statement, the Commissioner said that *"Building runways is a national competence. The EU's main objective is to reform ATM in Europe to cope w/ air traffic growth & operations under the safest, most cost & flight-efficient & environmentally friendly conditions"*. Air traffic growth is restricted by infrastructure on the ground, and while the decision to develop and/or build airports is a national competence, the EU has infrastructural funds to ensure that "on the ground capacity" can match that of "in the air". **Development in aviation should also ensure that airports evolve correctly, with added proven technology, and aprons, runways, taxiways and stands which can handle demand. Regarding ATM technologies, SESAR is in a phase of maturity and lessons have already been learned. Now, SESAR must be an efficient tool with one priority: supporting ANSPs and their staff.**

In short, ATCEUC recommends:

1. A reasonable increase of ANSP cost for RP3 of a least 5% for the period 2020-2024,
2. More investment in people and particularly in ATCOs and ATSEPs should be urgently started, to come back to sufficient level of staff is a long-term process,
3. The stopping of attacks against ATCOs,
4. An increase in the support for the toolbox for successful social dialogue with personal political involvement of Violeta Bulc, EU Commissioner for Transport and Karima Delli, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism,
5. More investment in new ATM technologies. SESAR must be now an efficient tool with one priority: supporting ANSPs and their staff.

ATCEUC has requested to meet Violeta Bulc, EU Commissioner for Transport and Karima Delli, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism to discuss these current difficulties.

ATCEUC believes that these five solutions must now become European Commission's and European Parliament's solutions and must be carried on by the entire aviation community. *"Air traffic controllers are at the heart of this."*: this statement is right but only if the European Commission, European Parliament, States, ANSPs, Airlines, and military **work to make it true together**. ATCEUC is ready, willing and able to discuss this 5 solutions plan.

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