

Brussels, 24 March 2017

Time for AVIATION to embody SOCIAL Europe

60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome

This year we, as Europeans, will celebrate 60 years of the greatest and most successful peace accord in the world. 60 years ago, the Treaty of Rome was signed laying its foundations, and those of the world's biggest international single market. The economic integration of 1958 then received its proper political dimension through the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992.

In his opening statement to the European Parliament in 2014, Jean-Claude Juncker reinforced the commitment to a social market economy. Furthermore, the Aviation Strategy in Europe of December 2015, includes the need to reinforce the social agenda and create high quality jobs in aviation.

We, as the aviation professionals, who physically bring the countries of Europe together strive not only for the highest standards of safety for those in our care, but to embody the European project in our everyday work.

European aviation is often hailed as one of the biggest success stories of a truly single market, with air transport liberalisation contributing to cheaper and more accessible air travel for Europeans. Traffic has grown exponentially. Safety rules, regulations and legislation have been harmonised across the continent.

And yet this success has come at a price. The rights of European aviation workers are still carved up by the Member States. Our collective rights – including the freedom of association and the right to collective action, including the strike enshrined in the Treaties – have come under sustained attack by certain employers seeking to selectively apply their opportunities under the same treaties at the cost of their employees. This has happened as the role of social dialogue has been diminished, sometimes in front of the eyes of the very national and European institutions who are supposed to foster the 'Social Europe'. Those same institutions have championed new business 'models' that seek competitive advantages by exploiting their own workers through gaps and grey areas in the EU framework. Over the past ten years, there has been little increase in employment despite the aforementioned growth in traffic. Job quality has deteriorated, and many jobs have been casualised to the detriment of working conditions as well as possibly to aviation safety.

These political commitments of the last 60 years, or of our current EU leadership, have yet to materialise in aviation whether in the form of concrete changes of policy or legislative proposals.

A future aviation policy must ensure that it enhances social as well as economic cohesion in Europe. It must keep and generate quality jobs to ensure passengers' safety, and there should be

no place for social dumping and flags of convenience in the sector. Before any further liberalisation of aviation can occur, be it within the EU, between the EU and others, or globally, strict social standards and internationally validated norms must be established.

The European Cockpit Association (ECA) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), officially recognised aviation industry social partners, take the opportunity of the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome to call upon the decision-makers to finally realise the strong Social Europe envisaged by its architects, and promised by its past and present leaders. One that offers fair and equal opportunities for all aviation workers. As the professionals who link Europe together, we will continue to seek this commitment, as only then can Europe be a true success story.

European Cockpit Association (ECA) is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 38.000 pilots from across Europe. Contact: ECA Kameliya Encheva, Communications Officer, Tel: +32 2 705 32 93. www.eurocockpit.be

European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) represents more than 270,000 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.). Contact: ETF Koen Reynaerts, Communications Officer, Tel: +32 2 285 46 69 www.etf-europe.org