

Commission questions Right2Strike for air traffic controllers

The European Commission published a Communication on Aviation: Open and Connected Europe (207/2017) 8 June 2017. European Commissioner Bulc responsible for EU transport policy questions the right to strike in it. She proposes to the Member States a series of concrete measures that would seriously curtail that workers' right. The ETUC Executive Committee adopted a statement condemning these proposals. [EPSU questioned the Commissioner on her position via social media](#). As a consequence we have received an open invitation to come and speak.

The Commission document acknowledges that the right to strike is a fundamental right. It is laid down in the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe. It is governed by national law regarding its practical implementation. The Commission complains that around 14% of delays of air flights are caused by air traffic controllers strikes. Compare this with the 57% where the problem is caused by capacity and staffing problems. There is not a word about addressing this, reducing the stress of workers etc. in the Communication. The Commission underlines the importance of social dialogue to address concerns, but again it only wants to sanction workers and not employers. Unions in both EPSU and ETF are organizing air-traffic controllers. We will be closely coordinating with ETF to get the Commission to withdraw these recommendations. This is not the role the European Commission should play in building Social Europe. It puts in the relaunch of the social dialogue by this Commission. It is not a contribution to the triple A status Commission President Juncker is seeking.

From the Communication:

The Commission has identified a number of operational measures which could be implemented by stakeholders to address delays caused by strikes.

These include improving social dialogue in Air Traffic Management sector - building upon the toolbox developed by the social partners, but also early notification of strikes by the

unions, individual notification of staff members, protection of overflights and protection of air traffic peak periods.

The Commission:

- Encourages Member States and stakeholders, including social partners, to apply the following practices with a view to improving service continuity in air traffic management:

- **Promote a sound and efficient social dialogue in Air Traffic Management undertakings - Reducing the impact of industrial action on the Air Traffic Management network starts by reducing the probability of strikes through better social dialogue;**
- **Unions to provide early notification of strikes - Providing sufficient notice in advance of a strike in order to enable aviation stakeholders to prepare mitigation plans ahead of industrial action (e.g. at least 14 days prior to the beginning of the strike);**
- **Staff members to provide individual notification of their participation to industrial action - Individual notification of staff members in sufficient time to allow the management to organise the air traffic and manage the staff upfront of the strike (e.g. 72 hours prior to the beginning of the strike);**
- **Preserve overflights of Member States affected by strikes - Ensuring 100% continuity of service for flights crossing the airspace of strike-affected Member States will reduce considerably the impact on the entire European Air Traffic Management network;**
- **Protect air traffic peak periods - Strikes occurring during peak periods of the day and peak periods of the year should be avoided.**

- Encourages operational stakeholders and the Network Manager to reinforce their cooperation to address traffic disruptions in the event of strikes and further develop existing mitigation measures. Air navigation service providers are encouraged to enter into cooperative agreements, on bilateral or multilateral bases, to improve service continuity in the event of strikes. The Network Manager should monitor progress in that area through a strike registry.

- Will, together with stakeholders, further explore the concept of a more integrated operating European Airspace with a view to ensuring optimal continuity of service. It will also investigate measures in the Single European Sky performance framework to better reflect the impact of strikes on Air Traffic Management performance.

(...)

[For the ETUC Press Release of the Executive Committee](#)

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[For the Staff Working Paper with further details on the proposed limitations on the right2strike](#)

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