



*"[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).*

On the occasion of the EU-Brazil Summit in Lisbon, the ATCEUC (Air Traffic Controllers European Union Coordination), representative of more than 12.000 controllers in Europe, demands from the Brazilian civil authorities, particularly the President, Lula Da Silva, the release, without any pre-conditions of the recently arrested Brazilian controllers and their return without prejudice to their posts, not accepting by any means the charge of dereliction of duty.

Freedom of speech is an essential element in a democracy and is also essential here. Censorship through detention may attempt to silence but cannot hide the true reasons underlying the declarations in this case. They remain true and urgent in a system which is sick and suffering from safety deficiencies.

IFATCA's recent declarations confirm this and specify the serious problems besetting the Brazilian air traffic control system.

International examples show that, without putting the sovereignty of the State at risk, a civil air traffic control system is the solution which best responds to the challenges of modern civil aviation. This is an industry which rests on the dynamics of its operational elements, it being incompatible with the rigid logic of military hierarchy. For this reason many countries have proceeded in the last decades to demilitarize their air traffic control systems, such as Italy in the early eighties.

ATCEUC and its associate controllers declare, on this occasion, their solidarity and support for the Brazilian organizations and that country's air traffic controllers who are undergoing a difficult situation at present, both professionally and personally.

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We hope for a speedy resolution of the current situation.

Yours sincerely.



Volker Dick,
ATCEUC President



François Burgues,
ATCEUC Secretary