



"[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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Aix-en-Provence, 30th September 2009

Dear Sirs,

ATCEUC represents 12.000 European Air Traffic Controllers and will soon represent the BGATC.

ATCEUC has always been of the idea that dialogue and staff involvement is paramount in the process of understanding the difficult and stressful job Air Traffic Controllers experience every day.

We have been informed by our Belgian colleagues that during the last few years their employer is abusing old internal regulations from 1976, to force Air Traffic Controllers to work in much too flexible working conditions which could lead to the undermining of the one prime condition their work: safety. Moreover, the Belgian Air Traffic Controllers' job is not even governed by a staff regulation in the country where the EC is bases its leadership of Europe !!

All the studies have shown that due to the stressful side of the job and the huge demands of concentration required to deliver a 100% safety record, a reflected and studied roster is needed where breaks and days-off are an integrated part of the safety of the skies. It is inconceivable that a Controller is expected to guarantee safety working an intense 12 days in succession and only being compensated with 2-3 days rest PER MONTH.

Last year, the Belgian Air Traffic Controllers attempted to warn the public and the state authorities about this phenomenon through a way that respects the travelling publics freedom of movement by issuing a press release, they even worked additional hours without compensation to make their point.

Despite our Belgian colleagues' efforts to inform citizens and authorities and their agreement with BELGOCONTROL to reduce staff numbers in response to the economical crisis and the drop in traffic, nothing changed and BELGOCONTROL has also unilaterally decided to postpone Air Traffic Controllers recruitments till 2011. Last but not least, when BELGOCONTROL is confronted with these realities, they trivialize the situation even when the warnings are so clearly stated for example, the regular traffic restrictions due to staff shortages or their decreasing levels of performance.

According to ATCEUC and also the Belgian Controllers, it is clear that the staff regulations must evolve towards the European standards in line with the spirit of the Single European Sky.

The Belgian Air Traffic Controllers are well known for their outstanding professional reputation, their tight bonds with neighbouring colleagues and with international organizations that defend the Air Traffic Controllers' profession. Towards their employer, "BELGOCONTROL", they have always shown a great dedication to find solutions in the interest of both parties. However, today this cooperation with their employer has reached a sad and dead-end situation.

ATCEUC, would like to draw your attention to the professional legitimacy of the Belgian Air Traffic Controllers action, their past efforts for constructive and dignified

approach to solve their problems have not been rewarded and therefore unfortunately it has ended with a deepening conflict.

Yours sincerely,



Volker Dick,
ATCEUC President



François Burgues,
ATCEUC Secretary