



"[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).

Aix-en-Provence, December 10th, 2010

Are the Spanish skies still safe?

ATCEUC (Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination) represents more than 13.000 Air Traffic Controllers through 28 unions all over Europe.

ATCEUC is shocked by the violence of the decisions taken by the Spanish Government against its air traffic controllers on 3rd and 4th of December. ATCEUC held an urgency meeting on 9th of December to decide what kind of assistance could be brought to its Spanish member, confronted to dictator-like measures who have been deprived of their basic elementary rights, the first of which being social dialogue.

On December 4th the European controllers proposed to organise a European mediation with CANSO to assist both Spanish parties out of a critical crisis situation.

The Spanish trade union accepted it.

The Spanish Provider refused it.

The Spanish State ignored it.

Confronted with the complete inability of the international community to even react to a dangerous situation for airspace users, we reiterate our call for reason.

And should AENA and the Spanish Government refuse to come to Brussels, we are willing to go to Spain to offer any assistance.

The reasons to declare the State of Alarm are doubtful for an EU country. The reasons to extend that situation are illogical and totally unacceptable. What are the fears of the Spanish Government? That a group of Spanish citizens are able to exercise the constitutional right to strike? It is by far easier to hold the controllers captive, denying them some fundamental rights than to use the democratic devices that the Spanish Government has at hand to solve the problem. Should the Spanish Government maintain the State of Alarm, it gives the rest of Europe proof of either its lack of willingness or its lack of ability to negotiate.

Secretariat : ATCEUC/CRNA SUD-EST - 1, rue Vinent Auriol - 13617 Aix-en-Provence Cedex 1 (France)
Tel : (33) 442 33 77 66 - Fax : (33) 442 33 78 95 - Email : head@atceuc.org

www.atceuc.org

ATCU (Serbia) - ATC Branch of IMPACT (Ireland) - ATCOR (Romania) - ATMPP (Italy) - BATCU (Bulgaria)
BGATC (Belgium) - CATCU (Croatia) - CYATCU (Cyprus) - DATCA (Denmark) - GATCA (Greece)
GdF (Germany) - GLCCA (Luxembourg) - ICEATCA (Iceland) - ITUATC (Serbia) - LIFSZ (Hungary)
MATCA (Malta) - MATCU (F. Y. Rep. of Macedonia) - NATCA (Norway) - NGATC (The Netherlands)
SKYCONTROL (Switzerland) - SINCTA (Portugal) - SNCTA (France) - SPKTA (Albania) - SSKL (Slovenia)
TUEM (Eurocontrol) - USAE AV (Italy) - USCA (Spain) - ZZKRL (Poland)

The conditions of our Spanish colleagues are by no means in the average of the rest of Europe although Minister Blanco and Mr Lema insist on that. And no matter how hard Mr Blanco tries to convince the Spanish public opinion, the salary of the controllers does not come from any public Spanish money.

Our experience of operational air traffic controllers, performing our jobs with armed military forces in the ops rooms does not allow a safe provision of air traffic services. Therefore to prevent incidents and allow air traffic controllers to do their job with at least less traffic pressure, we ask our members to study and organise coordinated and simultaneous measures all over Europe that would aim to ensure safety in a place where it is no longer guaranteed.

Should Spain continue in this assumed refusal to seek a concerted solution with its employees, with or without any form of mediation, we will have no choice but to conclude that Spain has decided to turn its back of the most elementary principle underlying the whole European Social Dialogue.

In the meantime the European Commission did not even voice a word. Although the initiatives taken to solve this crisis by Spain are in total opposition to any principle to be defended for the development of a "Single European Safe Sky".

We will therefore have no other choice than to refrain from participating to any European meeting involving the Spanish State or provider. That decision will apply to all activities at European or national level, and will be lifted the moment the Spanish authorities accept to simply resume a dialogue with its controllers.

Is it really too much to ask?