



"[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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ATCEUC SPRING MEETING MARCH 2015 FINAL COMMUNIQUE

ATCEUC concluded its spring Committee Meeting in Rome in the shadow of the terrible loss of life in the crash of the Germanwings aircraft in France. We would like to express again our deepest condolences to the loved ones of the victims. We also express our support and solidarity to the air traffic controllers who witnessed the tragedy.

Events like this must be a stern reminder for everyone in the aviation industry for the need of constant alertness in our effort to improve safety and security for the hundreds of millions of passengers who fly around the globe each year.

Central in this effort is the concept of Just Culture, which was discussed during our meeting by prominent professionals from the judiciary, the legal profession, EUROCONTROL, IFATCA and air traffic controllers with expertise on the subject. Just Culture is a culture in which front-line operators and others are not punished for actions, omissions or decisions taken by them which are commensurate with their experience and training, but where gross negligence, wilful violations and destructive acts are not tolerated.

It is worrying to note that around Europe there is an increase in the criminalization of honest mistakes by air traffic controllers, because this tendency undermines greatly the effort to help find inefficiencies in the air traffic management system and correct them, so that the same mistakes are avoided in the future. ATCEUC calls on everyone involved in air traffic management, states and national aviation authorities and the judiciary, EUROCONTROL, EASA, the European Commission and European Parliament, to help ensure that the uniform application of Just Culture is guaranteed around Europe. Aviation by its nature is transnational and standardized and such should be our approach.

We welcome on board ATCEUC the UNICON union representing air traffic controllers from Kosovo, which was accepted as our member during this meeting. We also welcome the FFPE union representing EUROCONTROL staff, which was accepted as an observer.

Rome,
27 March 2015

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