



*"[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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## PRESS RELEASE

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought all sectors of the Aviation Industry into crisis in an unprecedented fashion with traffic reductions of more than 90%.

International and national Government restrictions designed to combat the disease have also reduced air travel to the most essential flights only.

It is now obvious that the Air Traffic Management (ATM) sector is a crucial infrastructure which ensures that the skies in Europe have remained open and is guaranteeing the priority and safety of medical, repatriation, emergency and cargo flights when all other forms of transport infrastructure have become choked at border crossing bottlenecks all across Europe.

ATM personnel are still working 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, most of them in facilities not fully ready to cope with the pandemic spread within the premises.

Rostering systems have been adapted and contingency plans were created with the help of the Unions at national level. Some of these contingency plans are already in force in many States.

**When everyone is advised to stay at home, teams of dedicated European ATM professionals are setting an honourable example of commitment to keep the skies open for benefit and safety of all European citizens.**

To preserve the highest safety standards within each Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP), it is fundamental to maintain safe and healthy working conditions for our ATM Personnel.

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Therefore, **we urge the European Commission and the States to guarantee that each and every ANSP has the proper supports and budgets to enable them to care for their work as they struggle to keep Europe healthy and connected throughout not just this crisis but future crises as they may arise.**

While **we fully support the claim for assistance that some aviation stakeholders have already requested** to the European Institutions, **we demand any assistance be carefully planned in order to consider the European aviation system as a whole, including the ATM sector, Airports and the Airlines**, otherwise the stability and strength of the whole chain will be undermined in the long term.

This is an unprecedented situation for society globally not just the aviation sector.

Still, facing all the uncertainty and committed to the highest professional standards, the ATM sector is alive and maintaining the European skies running smooth and safely. **With this communique the ATCEUC Executive Board would also like to pay homage to each and every member of the Unions that make our Coordination and all those on the front line fighting this disease. They are a shining beacon of professionalism and commitment from the very roots of our society.**

Stay safe!

For further info contact [secretariat@atceuc.org](mailto:secretariat@atceuc.org)

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Volker Dick  
ATCEUC President

Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC) was created in 1989 and is currently composed of 35 professional and autonomous trade unions representing more than 14000 Air Traffic Controllers and Air Traffic Safety Engineering Personnel throughout Europe. ATCEUC is part of the "European Union Sectoral Social Dialogue - Civil Aviation" in the air traffic management field and it is recognised as a full member of the ICB. ATCEUC with its experts participates in every work group where the voice of its Members can and have to be expressed: SESAR JU, TSG, EGHD, EASA STeB, EASC, ASPReT, ATM Partners and other workshops or programmes within the framework of EUROCONTROL and the European Commission.