



Dear Members,

Once more, the new EU presidency, this time held by the Dutch, wants to pursue the SES. We can almost hear some politicians mumble, "I have a dream..."

Whereas the idea of a SES can make sense, it is very hard to imagine it coming to fruition, while civil-military coordination remains complicated, while national governments don't seem to understand each other and while our inputs are largely disregarded.

In the meantime, airlines continue to put tremendous resources into lobbying. Recently they created a new group, the A4E (Airlines for Europe: Lufthansa, Air France-KLM, easyJet, Ryanair, Norwegian, Finnair, IAG) to push for "lowering the cost of EU airports" and to "remove unreasonable taxes".

Obviously, our resources will never match those of the airlines, but we still need to continue to raise our concerns and make our voice heard. Lobbying and networking are becoming increasingly more important and we must organise ourselves effectively to do so. While we have the support of organisations like CESI, we need to do most of this work ourselves. But to be more effective, we also need more resources, time and money. This is a strategic topic to be discussed in Rhodes next May.

Attacks on the ATCO community, possibly affecting service quality and delivery, will continue and will increase. Our positions need to be better heard and understood by EU politicians, institutions, airlines and the public.

Individual responsibility and involvement of each and every union in ATCEUC is priceless in this effort. All our members need to be strong at home and active abroad. Together we can weather the storm and show the aviation world that we are and will continue to be a vital element in the system. In the escalating conflict between cost efficiency and safety, we are trained to put safety first, but we have proven we can provide both.



*During the EB meeting in Madrid in March we met with the ATCEUC SESAR Team. With thanks to our Spanish member USCA for providing their office facilities for the meeting.*

For comments, opinions and suggestions regarding this Newsletter please send an email to [board@atceuc.org](mailto:board@atceuc.org)

## Ryanair, free advertising and overpriced water

After the strike of SNCTA in January, Ryanair called on the European Commission and launched a petition to remove the right to strike from "tiny groups of Air Traffic Controllers".

The French constitution protects the right to strike as one of the fundamental rights of French workers. The European Commission has no jurisdiction or the power to change it. This begs the question: was it really just a "free publicity stunt" for Ryanair?

The toothless ultimatum by the Irish low-cost carrier, which flies to a small airport in the outskirts of Paris, was presented as a dilemma: either the right to strike is removed or other European ACCs should manage flights over the French airspace during strikes.

Philippe Uséo (member of the EB of SNCTA) gave his views to the newspaper Aerotime: "History shows that, legally or not, strikes have happened in every country since the creation of an employer / employee relation. In France, for ATCOs, the right to strike was granted in 1984. Before that, actions had created far more disorder traffic wise than today's strikes. The strike of 1973 presents a tragic example of the fact that Ryanair's initiative is nothing more than a dangerous populist announce."

"In 1973, ATCOs decided they didn't want to continue working under unsatisfactory conditions. And so, the French Government imposed that the duties of Civil Air Traffic Control should be transferred to the Military Air Traffic Control. As a result, we learned the hard way that the military and civil ATCOs have very specific and very different skills. A couple of days later, two aircraft collided over Nantes, resulting in the death of 68 people."

"Saying that when ATCOs are on strike, the job should be done by ATCOs from other countries, or military, only proves that Ryanair doesn't know anything about Air Traffic Control."

Ryanair should know that there is no such thing as a free lunch. Its passengers certainly know it. In their case, water isn't free, either. According to the British Daily Mail, "Ryanair drinking water is 12 times more expensive than supermarket".

So before the next Ryanair attack against ATCOs, CEO Michael O'Leary should ask himself this: "If I charge drinking water 12 times the normal price, is European ATM really that expensive? And what would I charge the airlines, had I owned the entire ATM system in Europe?"

## How CESI can help

Like in many companies, the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) pension scheme came under pressure in 2010. Staff unions and the IAA agreed on proposed corrective measures. However, in 2014 the IAA decided unilaterally to freeze pensions in payment, meaning your pension would never increase after retirement.

ATC Branch objected strongly to this. When the union examined the National Performance plan submission, the IAA had made no reference to the funding deficit and it deliberately ignored its responsibilities under Articles 7 and 14 of EU Reg. 391/2013.

Last February, ATC Branch wrote to CESI seeking help, the union's view being that the IAA is leading the charge to destroy the pension expectations of its employees. There can be a wider European impact if the IAA is successful. With CANSO's help, other ANSPs will possibly follow the same path.

The IAA and CANSO are well positioned to lobby EU Commissioners. Workers do not have the same access. Thankfully, through CESI, it looks like Irish Air Traffic Controllers will get a chance to meet with the relevant policy officer and the head of unit in the European Commission who were in charge of steering Regulation 391/2013, and also with staff from the cabinet of the European Commissioner for Transport. A strategy will be developed with CESI after these meetings.

Our relationship with CESI is proving very fruitful, especially while the European regulatory dimension comes into play. We are very grateful for all the help they have given us already.



**The next Committee Meeting will be held in Rhodes, Greece  
from May 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016.  
Have a pleasant first half of 2016 and see you all there.**