



"[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

SINGLE EUROPEAN SKY: One step closer... from what?

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Last Thursday (30 January 2014), the TRAN Committee of the European Parliament approved by majority the so-called SES2+. The day before, Air Traffic Controllers across Europe demonstrated their opposition to this legislative package, in a European Action Day called by ATCEUC.

Under the intense and continuous lobbying by airlines, Members of the European Parliament, without any technical expertise, voted in favour of a project that will ultimately lead to a dangerous downgrade of air navigation service provision, jeopardizing thousands of jobs and increasing the cost for air travellers across Europe.

The new proposed package introduces market principles for support services, fragmenting the safety chain inside the ANSPs and leading to new monopolies. At the same time a new bureaucratic monster, the EAA – European Aviation Agency, will be created, contributing nothing to the efficiency or the improvement of the Single European Sky, but gorging on many millions of Euros from travellers and airlines.

The SES2+ is, once again, announced as the final cure for every disease in the European skies.

We still remember that the same has happened with the previous two packages. However, the major changes that have occurred in the meantime and the real needs of customers have only been satisfied by those who speak the same language and possess the real know-how, the ATM community. Unfortunately, it seems that their opinions are not welcome anymore and are constantly put aside when it comes to building an effective SES.

The new package also eliminates Member States from the decision-making process, by introducing the concept of delegated acts for the economic regulation of ATM. With this small change the European Commission will have all the powers to fix prices at EU-level

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without having to negotiate with Member States. This is certainly a good example on how European Commission acts nowadays!

The SES2+ promises a revolution with direct routes and a new and efficient airspace architecture that will be accomplished through SESAR technology. For the last 10 years, ATCOs across Europe work every day only to realise that these new systems, new architectures and SESAR are purely fairytales and the increasing demand of air traffic continues to be handled as it used to be, based on ATCOs productivity. Until when?

SESAR's contribution to the performance of the ATM System has been delayed for a decade. Despite this, the Commission insists on achieving unrealistic targets, all the while blaming States, ANSPs and staff for its failure.

The EU's politicians have to quickly decide what kind of project they want for the Single European Sky. If the decision is to push further and further for cost reductions, leading ANSPs to freeze their investment plans or to delay new developments, then SES2+ will once again will result in a lot of wasted, meaningless paper. If, on the other hand, the decision is to move to a state of the art technology to transform the European Skies, then cost reduction measures have to stop. Both approaches cannot work at the same time.

ATCEUC will continue to strive for a balanced approach of the SES. We believe that the Single European Sky can only be achieved with real and tangible solutions for airlines, by delivering a safe, efficient and on time service for EU citizens and at the same time by contributing to a greener ATM in Europe.

SES2+ will contribute nothing to these goals!

Volker Dick
President of ATCEUC

