



"[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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RP4: ATCEUC urges European states to safeguard investment in the human dimension, capacity and systems for 2025-2029

Airbus' Global Market Forecast 2023 highlights the strong link between air transport and economic development. In Europe, the average annual trips per capita is 1.4, while in the United States, it is 50% higher and twice as high in the United Arab Emirates.

As the new economic growth cycle begins, the European ATM/ANS sector must be prepared for this. Airbus also notes that more and more people are flying for the first time than ever before, with citizen travel aspirations to fly at an all-time high.

In light of this, the European Commission has proposed a reduction in Unit Cost for the ATM/ANS sector for the years 2025-2029. However, ATCEUC believes that this policy is misguided and will lead to weakening the European air transport industry. Instead, the priority should be to strengthen the ATM/ANS sector for the future.

Comments on cost efficiency

The current lack of Air Traffic Controllers and ATSEPs requires financial efforts to recruit and retain talent in the sector. Competition for skilled personnel is higher than ever, and diminishing the sector's ability to recruit the necessary professionals will have severe consequences on the short and long terms.

On the technological side, new systems, new technologies also require strong investment. Implementation, integration of new solutions in legacy systems, training: all these activities mean an additional need for

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resources at financial and staffing level. The implementation of CP1 projects is a regulatory requirement and as such imposes resources to be found by ANSPs over RP4 and beyond.

Comments on capacity

The RP4 EU-wide capacity target, the target values, and the resulting national reference values proposed by the European Commission are considered unrealistic.

The current NOP forecasts enroute delays of around 1,12 min/flight in 2025 and 1,04 min/flight in 2026. The European Commission proposal is around 30% lower. How such an evolution could be considered as realistic to be achieved in only a few months? Not being able to achieve them would lead the ATM/ANS sector to be imposed strong financial penalties and would consequently reduce its ability to face current and future challenges.

ATCEUC calls on European states to adopt a protective approach for the sector. The challenges, weaknesses, and solutions have been identified. The proper way out to build a sustainable European aviation industry goes together with sufficient resources for the ATM/ANS sector.

Brussels, 22 May 2024

Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC) was created in 1989 and is currently composed of 33 professional and autonomous trade unions representing more than 14000 Air Traffic Controllers (ATCOs) and Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel (ATSEPs) 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, CEGHD, EASA STeB, EASC, ASPReT, ATM Partners and other workshops or programmes within the framework of EUROCONTROL and the European Commission.