



*"[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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# Final Communiqué of the 64th ATCEUC Committee Meeting

Sofia, Bulgaria – 25 April 2025

The Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC) convened its 64th Committee Meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 22 to 25 April 2025. Hosted by BATCU, the Bulgarian Air Traffic Controllers Union, the event was marked by exceptional organization and warm hospitality. ATCEUC extends its sincere gratitude to BATCU, BULATSA (the Bulgarian Air Traffic Services Provider), and the Directorate General Civil Aviation of Bulgaria for their active participation and invaluable contributions to the meeting's success.

## Key Discussions and Outcomes:

### 1. Support for BHANSA and EUROCONTROL Immunity:

ATCEUC reiterated its firm support for BHANSA following the Belgian court order freezing route-charge funds. In response, ATCEUC Committee adopted an Open Letter urging swift action to protect EUROCONTROL's immunity, safeguard air navigation funding, and ensure uninterrupted ATC services in Bosnian and Herzegovinian airspace.

### 2. Network Performance and Delay Reduction

EUROCONTROL's Director of Network Management, Mr. Iacopo Prissinotti, highlighted that, confronted with a sharp rise in air traffic driven by major societal shifts ("people want to fly"), the air traffic management (ATM/ANS) industry must face the pressing question: "What must change?" With air traffic in Europe expected to increase by at least 5.2% this summer compared to the previous year, he also stressed the vital importance of strict adherence to flight plans and disciplined coordination among all stakeholders. Such efforts could lead to a 5–10% reduction in network-wide delays on non-weather days, thereby enhancing overall efficiency. Mr. Prissinotti hammered, "We need to increase the level of adherence; we must be disciplined". During the meeting, Mr. Prissinotti and Mr. Steven Moore stressed the need for a shared understanding that no problem is purely local, highlighting the importance of collaboration to build a more resilient and efficient network for the busy summer ahead.

### 3. Ukraine Airspace Reopening Scenarios: Mr. Prissinotti and Mr. Steven Moore, together with meeting participants, reviewed three potential scenarios for the reopening of Ukrainian airspace. ATCEUC reaffirmed its solidarity with Ukrainian colleagues and member organization ATCTUA, stressing the need to prioritize safety through a phased implementation.

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4. **EASA Task Force on Fatigue:** The EASA Task Force on fatigue has initiated a pivotal process towards establishing more robust and comprehensive guidance for managing fatigue in aviation. Recognizing the sensitivity of this issue and its significant operational implications, it is imperative that all parties involved approach this matter with the utmost responsibility. Associated guidance material of Regulation (EU) 2017/373 is set to undergo revisions, but this process must be navigated with caution and a broad, EU-wide perspective to ensure that any changes enhance safety and operational effectiveness across Europe.
5. **Reference Period 4 (RP4) and Performance Plans:** During the 64th ATCEUC Committee Meeting in Sofia, the challenges associated with Reference Period 4 (RP4) of the Single European Sky performance scheme were a focal point. The committee expressed strong concern over the rejection of numerous national performance plans, highlighting the necessity for the European Commission and Member States to thoroughly assess the forthcoming challenges in the ATM/ANS sector. ATCEUC urges the development of realistic and effective performance plans that prioritize resilience, investment in staff, and technological advancement over mere cost reductions, while emphasizing the importance of constructive dialogue and mutual understanding among stakeholders. Full involvement and comprehensive data sharing with staff representatives at both national and EU levels are essential for the success of the RP4 performance plan. We strongly demand changes to the current process to ensure these elements are fully integrated. The ATCEUC committee meeting reiterated its longstanding message that the ATM/ANS industry will continue to rely on human expertise well beyond 2040, necessitating continuous and adequate recruitment of air traffic controllers and air traffic safety electronics personnel. ATCEUC thanked Ms. Cathy Mannion, Chair of the Performance Review Body, for her insightful presentation, which sparked a lively exchange of ideas.

### **Conclusion:**

The 64th ATCEUC Committee Meeting is delighted to welcome HTK SEN from Türkiye as the newest member of ATCEUC, raising our membership to 34 organizations. A warm welcome also goes to ATCA SR from Slovak Republic, now joining ATCEUC as an observer. The upcoming meeting will be hosted by VNLG from 7th to 10th October in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

ATCEUC committee meeting concluded with an unanimous commitment to uphold the highest standards of safety, efficiency, and collaboration in European air traffic management. ATCEUC remains dedicated to advocating for the interests of air traffic controllers and ensuring that their voices are heard in all relevant forums.

Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC) was created in 1989 and is currently composed of 34 professional and autonomous trade unions representing more than 16000 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 ATM/ANS CSTG, EASC, ASPReT, JCTF, ATM Partners and other workshops or programmes within the framework of EASA, EUROCONTROL and the European Commission.