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European Transport Workers' Federation
Fédération Européenne des Travailleurs des Transports
Europäische Transportarbeiter-Föderation
Federación Europea de los Trabajadores del Transporte

Prime Minister
Mr Valdis Dombrovskis
Brivibas bulvaris 36
LV-1520 Riga

By e-mail: olita.augustovska@mk.gov.lv

Brussels, 24 May 2012

Dear Mr Valdis Dombrovskis,

Re: suspension and dismissal of Mrs Straume

I am writing to you on behalf of the European Transport Worker's Federation (ETF), which represents more than 250.000 civil aviation workers all over Europe.

We have been informed by our affiliate, LAAF, that on 23rd March 2012, the leader of the LGSVDA (Latvian Air Traffic Controllers Trade Union) – Mrs Ausra Straume has been suspended from her duties as an air traffic controller and the preparatory initiatives have been taken by SJSC "Latvijas Gaisa Satiksme" for her dismissal.

On 2nd March 2012, trade union LGSVDA sent a letter to the Latvian Ministry of Transport in which her situation at the company was explained. As a matter of fact, the trade union asked to nominate aviation specialists from the company for the new company board (at least most of the board members), as they definitely would be more experienced and competent in this specific air navigation service industry and would be able to resolve the professional issues at the company and bring more benefit for the success of its evolution.

Unfortunately, no actions have followed from the Ministry of Transport. In addition, the SJSC "Latvijas Gaisa Satiksme" has started making psychological pressure on air traffic controllers and also suspended the trade union leader Mrs Ausra Straume from her duties as an air traffic controller. The disciplinary investigation on her is also going on now. The reason for the suspension is the above mentioned letter to the Ministry of Transport and the discrepancies identified by the trade union which are mentioned in the letter. The employer has sent Mrs Ausra Straume to extra health examination. Her dismissal was requested in regard of so-called "unlawful actions and non-compliance with the position".

Such SJSC "Latvijas Gaisa Satiksme" actions are against the requirements stated in Directive 2003/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2003 on occurrence reporting in civil aviation, where it is clearly stated in Article 8 that "*Member states shall ensure that employees who report incidents of which they may have knowledge are not subjected to any prejudice by their employer*".



President Lars Lindgren

Vice Presidents Alexander Kirchner
Brigitta Paas

General Secretary Eduardo Chagas



It is stipulated in Law on Trade Unions of the Republic of Latvia Articles 4, 13 that trade unions are independent and are entitled to propose to be brought to justice and to dismiss officials who fail to comply with legislation. According to Article 14, trade unions have the right to represent and defend its members in public institutions and other organizations. Article 16 says that there shall be no imposition of any disciplinary punishment for trade union's elected employees without discussing the issue at an administration and trade union meeting. This requirement has not been satisfied to date. It is also stipulated in the Labour Law of the Republic of Latvia Article 9, 29 that "differential treatment and causing adverse effects to the employee if he/she uses his legitimate rights are prohibited". Currently it is a gross violation of the rights of both the trade union LGSVDA and ordinary worker – air traffic controller Mrs Ausra Straume, who is also leader the of "Women section" in Latvia.

We hereby ask you to stop the process of suspension of Mrs Ausra Straume from air traffic controller's duties and stop the disciplinary investigation. At the same time, we are requiring the Department of Aviation of the Ministry of Transport to effectively monitor compliance with current legislation of enterprises of the industry and, in particular, requiring negotiation between the union and the company involved in the conflict with the participation of representatives of the Ministry. We consider that a good social dialogue on this issue is the way to find the best solution for the air navigation service provider.

Of course, we stay at your disposal if you think that in a way or in another, the ETF may help finding balanced solutions.

Yours Sincerely,



Eduardo Chagas
General Secretary



President Lars Lindgren

Vice Presidents Alexander Kirchner
Brigitta Paas

General Secretary Eduardo Chagas

