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Fédération Européenne des Travailleurs des Transports
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Unit E.3, Single European Sky
DG MOVE, European Commission

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ETF involvement in the Social and Human Dimension Roadmap

ETF shares the concerns expressed by the other professional staff organisations regarding recent inappropriate interventions from the European Commission into the ATM industry.

For several months, and despite the current difficult situation, ETF has been very proactive in the Social and Human Dimension Roadmap. Our motivation was, of course, to represent the interests of the ATM staff. Still, for us, this was only possible in a well-performing ATM industry that truly supports the social dimension while not disregarding the needs of the other stakeholders.

After decades of top-down European legislation, we thought that some lessons had been learnt in Brussels; it seems that we were wrong.

The current crisis has starkly revealed what we have been claiming for decades, that ATM is much more than a service for the airlines; it is critical European infrastructure. A political choice was made to finance ATM mainly via passenger and cargo charges, but even with a drop of 90% of air traffic, the European sky needs to be open 100% of the time. It serves the vital tasks of facilitating repatriation and essential flights, the movement of cargo and goods such as masks, the transport of medical staff and other emergency flights, not to mention the need for it to be in existence as the aviation community returns to 'normal' operations. The provision of ATM does not lend itself by design to rapid scalability.

The recent developments of the redesign of the third reference period show us that a small group of airline lobbyists with little or no knowledge of ATM exerts a disproportionate amount of influence on the European Commission.

Having an EU body such as DG MOVE asking ANSPs to reduce their employment costs is showing how far outside of their remit some European institutions are going, kowtowing to lobbyists that have nothing but their own interests in mind, and certainly not the success of every element of



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aviation in Europe. Changing so drastically the rules of the reference period just after its start is also further proof of how unhinged the process is.

To dictate that the ATM industry should undergo similar economic measures as other parts of the economy, given the unique and critical role of ATM within the wider aviation industry chain is just nonsense. It is simply an opportunistic attack on ATM during a global crisis that will only compound the problems we have seen year-on-year since the dawn of economic regulation: driving down ATM costs, at all costs apparently, whilst expecting the critical infrastructure to be there as traffic returns simply does not work, and it has to stop. Full stop.

Therefore, as it seems the European Commission has no more interest in truly improving the performance of the ATM system under the pillar of social dialogue that it itself established, **ETF is suspending its work on topics such as the Social and Human Dimension Roadmap until we regain some clarity on the goal of the policy makers.**

The current crisis offers an opportunity – not to weaken workers’ rights, but instead to make the industry more socially sustainable. To truly engage with the social dimension of European aviation, not just with empty promises, but with concrete actions. We invite the European Commission to join us in this endeavour and embrace genuine engagement and consultation.

Yours sincerely,

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ETF Head of Aviation and Operations

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Chair of ETF Air Traffic Management Committee



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