

# International Transport Workers Federation



ITF House, London  
London, October 4-5<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## Emergency motion in support of Austrian Trade Unionist

The ITF Civil Aviation Section, representing 627,406 Aviation workers and 4.5 million workers worldwide, met on 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> October 2012 in London.

The ITF and ETF have been informed by our Austrian member, VIDA, that Austro Control has suspended Norbert Payr from his job as Air Traffic Controller (ATCO) and it has started the legal procedure to terminate his labour contract. Today the case is at court.

Norbert was recently fired for a line he gave in a newspaper, even though he was speaking in his capacity as an elected Trade Union representative. Austro Control considers that comment as a strong insult and as heavily damaging to the company.

Clearly in a European democratic country, this employer's behaviour is not acceptable and we believe that Austro Control severely overreacted.

On the contrary we strongly believe that Norbert is intensely improving the Austro Control image by being an Austrian ATCO. Norbert had a key role in facilitating the FABCE (Functional Airspace Block Central Europe) development. He has been proactive in the creation of the FABCE Social Dialogue, working in cooperation with Austro Control and all the Trade Unions and ANSPs involved.

At EU level, Norbert is the co-chair of the Air Traffic Management (ATM) Social Dialogue working group, welcomed and appreciated by the CANSO side.

The Austro Control decision against him appears to be an attempt to limit the freedom of the Trade Union activity.

It is clear that if Austro Control does not change its mind, this situation will create tensions and difficulties at all the levels. The ITF and ETF strongly believe that these negative effects can be avoided, for the benefit of Austro Control, FABCE, CANSO and all the ATM industry.

Currently Austro Control insists that Norbert must step down from the works council. Then they are ready to withdraw the case. However, the problem with that is that it's the only democratic legitimation for trade unionists and it's practically impossible to continue with TU work when you lose the works council. It is an unacceptable proposal for Norbert, Vida and all the workers that Norbert represents.

The ITF and ETF call Austro Control and the Austrian Government to reinstate Norbert in his job and in his TU representative rights.

In addition, the ETF will not attend anymore meetings with CANSO in European Bodies (such as Social Dialogue, ICB and Expert group) where Austro Control is part of the CANSO delegation.