

# ETF statement on the adoption of the Single European Sky 2+ reform

After more than 10 years, the legislative process of the Single European Sky 2+ (SES2+) reform has finally been concluded, with the European Parliament giving its final approval on 22 October 2024. The ETF has followed this process attentively and proactively, aware of the potential impact of this reform on air traffic management (ATM) workers across Europe.

European regulations should ensure safe, efficient and socially responsible air transport. The European Commission's initial proposal for SES2+ did not fulfil these criteria, which led multiple ETF affiliates to launch actions throughout the process. Indeed, ultra-liberal dogma was at play, clashing against the need to ensure safety at all times and social acceptability. For instance, decisions regarding the bundling or unbundling of services should be left to national decision-makers. Any institutional setup regarding air traffic service provision should be organised bottom-up and not imposed top-down.

For these reasons, we welcome the fact that many of the initial European Commission intents for the Single European Sky 2+ reform did not make it into the adopted text, the most notable being the mandatory splitting of ATM service provision ("unbundling"), the reconfiguration of the Performance Review Body from an advisory entity into a regulator, and the mandatory separation of ATM service provision from National Supervisory Authorities. These were aspects of the Commission's plan that entailed further forced liberalisation and the imposition of unreasonable, unrealistic performance requirements to ATM services. The implementation of such a system would have seriously curtailed working conditions of ATM workers.

Although the worst scenario has been avoided, the adopted reform still does not adequately safeguard the interests of ATM workers. Putting reality back in performance regulation, improving staffing and training, preventing fatigue and protecting the right to strike are some of the demands that we will continue to push for regardless of this outcome. We will persist in demanding improvements in staffing levels to fulfill our duties. Furthermore, the lack of measures addressing sustainability in the reform is glaring and contradicts earlier claims of delivering environmentally friendly outcomes.

To those who have already started to voice their disagreement with this result and demand the reopening of this file, we would like to remind that this adoption of a revised Single European Sky is the result of a long, conflicting process of over one decade which did not help the relationship between airspace users and the providers of ATM services.

Instead, looking forward, the ETF calls for an unwavering commitment to rethinking ATM performance regulation. It is essential to achieve a socially-acceptable balance between economic viability, capacity delivery, and environmental goals. Anything less is insufficient to meet the needs of our sector and stakeholders.