



UNION SYNDICALE

European Civil Service Public Européen
Membre de l'Union Syndicale Fédérale, affiliée à l'ISP et à la FSESP



OPEN LETTER

To: Heads of Member State Delegations to the Provisional Council, Frank Brenner - DG EUROCONTROL, Violeta Bulc – European Commission, Commissioner for Transport, Henrik Hololei - Director General of EC/DG MOVE, Gertrud Ingestad – Director General of EC/DG for Informatics, Jos Delbeke – Director General of EC/DG Climate, Lowri Evans – Director General of EC/DG Growth, Patrick KY – Executive Director of EASA, Florian Guillermet - Executive Director of SESARSJU and Jorge Domecq – Chief Executive of EDA.

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Union Syndicale Fédérale
European Transport Workers' Federation

The future of EUROCONTROL

The Union Syndicale strategic view on the direction that the EUROCONTROL Organisation should take to fulfil its mission effectively within the political and economic constraints faced by the aviation community is:

1. Working with the European Union, its Institutions, Agencies and Joint Undertakings

Our pan-European expertise is widely recognised, valued and needed by the EU and our combined Member States. However, our contribution to the Single European Sky has routinely encountered some difficulties. This has been mainly caused by a lack of harmonisation between our legal and financial instruments and those of the EU.

It is our view that: EUROCONTROL Member States should instruct the Agency to formally implement basic “control” requirements of an international organisation to which EU budgets and tasks can be delegated. We consider that a deep alignment with the regulatory requirements of EU funding is essential because many of the principles of public financial management that apply to the EU budget¹ have no equivalent in EUROCONTROL.

This is a major obstacle to the smooth functioning and funding of EUROCONTROL activities carried out under or within EU mandates and regulations as well as to securing the participation of our non-EU member states in the Single European Sky (Network Manager;

¹ For example, Transparency and Additionality are defined in EU legal instruments but no equivalent exists in EUROCONTROL.

Performance Review; Safety Regulation; SESAR Joint Undertaking; CEF, TEN-T and Horizon 2020 funding).

The Member States of EUROCONTROL and the EU would benefit from an improved transparency while the EU could provide more financial contributions to EUROCONTROL activities which could reduce the cost-base. There should be no legal obstacle to this deep alignment as the Provisional Council has already accepted to apply relevant EU legislation in the nomination act of the Network Manager.

We firmly believe that a long term agreement with the EU is unavoidable and would greatly benefit the European aviation community and ultimately the European citizens.

2. Building trust while remaining impartial and independent

Unlike the EU², EUROCONTROL has no strong legal instruments in place yet to identify, prevent and manage conflict of interest or to publish the beneficiaries of its public procurement contracts and recruitment competitions. International Organisations receiving funding from the EU budget must establish such measures before tasks and resources can be delegated to them³.

Moreover, to maintain trust and confidence in all aspects of our public service delivery, from recruitment and procurement to high level decision making, it is essential that our Organisation can demonstrate that it can be trusted to work consistently and impartially in the public interest.

Further alignment between the EU and EUROCONTROL in this area, combined with alignment of our legal and financial instruments, will provide greater assurance of value for money from the Agency's contribution to the success of the SES initiatives.

3. A realistic and fair approach to the cost-base

EUROCONTROL has drastically reduced its own cost-base during and after the financial crisis of 2008. EUROCONTROL staff has contributed as well to this reduction by increased working hours, age of retirement modified, reduced pension rights, promotions limited, a general lowering of the seniority and grade of staff undertaking responsibilities, and an overall reduction in the number of staff by 25-33%⁴ in the Agency. The new Administrative Reform recently adopted has introduced all these measures.

What can still be done is to better define the perimeter of the EUROCONTROL activities, and realign the Agency around the core business of Network Manager and other ATM

² Article 57 of Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 defines Conflict of Interest but no legal definition exists in EUROCONTROL.

³ Article 60 of Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012.

⁴ "Study on the resources deployed in the area of European aviation safety before and after the creation of EASA *Final Report*" p.47, 23 April 2015, Written by: Ecorys Nederland BV and National Aerospace Laboratory NLR Contracted by: European Commission, DG Mobility and Transport

activities outside the scope of NM Implementing Rule, , but fully recognised as activities of great added value provided by the Agency to Member States and stakeholders.

If the Member States ask us again to consider the need for further post-crisis cost reduction, we wish to point out that the single most expensive element that remains in our cost-base is the high level of EUROCONTROL internal taxation by comparison with that applied in the EU staff regulations.

Internal studies conducted by the Agency have estimated that harmonising our internal taxation regime with that of the EU for active staff and introducing the EU internal taxation regime to the pensioners could reduce the cost-base by more than €100 million each year. We therefore ask the Member States to align EUROCONTROL on the EU internal taxation scheme.

4. Concluding statement

It is our view that, inter alia for its long term future, EUROCONTROL must direct its strategy toward greater functional integration with the procedures and legal frameworks of the European Union if it is to fulfil its mission on behalf of all its Member States and stakeholders.

We therefore recommend that EUROCONTROL adopts, within its own legal structures and institutional set up, the EU framework financial regulation⁵ to facilitate closer co-operation with the EU. This instrument can be adapted to the specificities of EUROCONTROL whilst preventing additional effort to align the current EUROCONTROL regulations.

Such a measure will be a major contribution to the delivery of high quality public services; to fully exploit the expertise of our staff; and, to provide the openness, transparency and ethical conduct expected by the taxpayer from any European Public Service.

The Union Syndicale - Brussels at EUROCONTROL is willing to support a modernisation of EUROCONTROL and open to discuss proposals in this respect from Member States and stakeholders which could enhance EUROCONTROL activities for the benefit of the European Aviation Community.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the Union Syndicale-Brussels delegation at EUROCONTROL,



Georges Tsolos
Vice-President

⁵ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1271/2013 of 30 September 2013 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies referred to in Article 208 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council.