

To Marianne Thyssen
Commissioner for Employment,
Social Affairs, Skills and Labour
Mobility

Violeta Bulc
Commissioner for Transport

CC Valdis Dombrovskis
Vice-President for the Euro and
Social Dialogue, also in charge of
Financial Stability, Financial
Services and Capital Markets
Union

[Letter sent by e-mail]

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CC

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Dear Commissioner Thyssen,
Dear Commissioner Bulc,

We acknowledge your letter of 18 July regarding the European Commission's Communication on Aviation "Open and Connected Europe" and its accompanying Staff Working Document.

Unfortunately, your reply does not reassure us that the Commission is truly willing to act for a stronger social Europe and uphold the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, specifically the right to strike.

In our letter, we respectfully asked you to withdraw and amend the Staff Working Document "Practices favouring Air Traffic Management Services Continuity" because it recommends that Member States limit the right to strike and/or the right to organise.

We are disappointed that your reply does not show any willingness to take our grave concerns onboard and review or re-consider the Commission's position. We are particularly concerned that you seem to have overlooked the information provided by the ETF that the recommendations supported by the Commission in your document will create unsafe conditions in respect of air travel.

As we have previously outlined, social dialogue can only function effectively if the right to strike is protected in order to ensure the balance of power. The right to collective bargaining cannot exist without the right to strike.

The mention of Principle 8 of the European Pillar of Social Rights in this respect highlights the problem that the ETUC has previously raised about the Pillar. It is unacceptable to have high level principles set out in the Pillar recalling fundamental rights of the Charter (Art.28) while at the same time Communications are issued in the daily work of the Commission in which those rights are dismantled, ignored and certainly not promoted by the European Commission.

We reiterate our request for withdrawal and amendment, we will also inform President Juncker about this matter. At the same time, we support the ETF initiative to lodge a formal complaint with the office of the European Ombudsman.

In July, you made a commitment to the ETF that you plan to present a Social Package in aviation in spring 2018. We would like to insist that this issue is again included in this package but taking into account the views of the workers this time.

Finally, we regret that your schedule did not allow you to meet with us as arranged and we are seeking an urgent meeting to discuss a satisfactory resolution to this situation.

I look forward to hearing a positive reply from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luca Visentini', with a stylized, cursive script.

Luca Visentini
ETUC General Secretary