



## **Pilots calling for support of colleagues through crowdfunding**

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**Empowering and supporting pilots in their efforts to collectively negotiate is the aim of a new crowdfunding campaign that has just been launched. The [#PilotUnity campaign on GoFundMe](https://www.gofundme.com/pilotunity2017) (<https://www.gofundme.com/pilotunity2017>) is expected to attract wide attention and donations from pilots, aviation professionals and keen European fliers.**

The crowdfund comes in the aftermath of the recent flight cancellation crisis in Europe. It is now clear that there is a new generation of pilots who will not be silenced, denied their fundamental right to Freedom of Association, or discouraged from organising collective negotiations. These groups of pilots want to choose their own representatives, to stand up and speak on their behalf, without fear of punishment or even worse - losing their job. The fund is administered by the European Cockpit Association on behalf of the entire pilot community. The main purpose is to provide financial security to pilot leaders, having distinguished themselves as representatives in the struggle for collective representation.

"We've got your back. This is all we want to say with this fund to the pilots who may be stifled by fear of reprisals and worry that their actions to organise the pilot community will get them fired", says Capt. Dirk Polloczek, ECA President. "They need to know that the pilot community in Europe and beyond is united and determined to go in one direction. Through this crowdfund, the professional body of European pilots will provide the necessary support to allow the pilot leaders to focus on their core tasks of organising and negotiating."

This crowdfund campaign comes at a moment when large pilot organisations from across the Atlantic have also offered help to their European pilot colleagues, including financial support.

"The need for this fund is a big warning sign that things are going seriously wrong in European aviation - because not every airline respects the principles of social dialogue. Instead they have their crews spread across Europe on a variety of atypical and precarious contracts, denying them effective access to genuine representation and genuine negotiations with management", explains ECA Secretary General Philip von Schöppenthau. "We have seen examples of pilot representatives who dared to speak up were singled out, disciplined or fired. Whatever comes through the fund will serve as a safety net for pilot representatives that may end up in a similar situation."

"We count on the support of our professional community, of the community of aviation employees, and of the community of citizens who fly as passengers in Europe", says Dirk Polloczek. "These people hold the power to say that no-one should be intimidated, pressured or silenced. No aviation employee should be afraid to speak up, be a whistle blower or stick his or her neck out."

The crowdfund is available on <https://www.gofundme.com/pilotunity2017>

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*Note to editors: ECA is the representative body of over 38,000 pilots from across Europe, striving for the highest levels of aviation safety and fostering social rights and quality employment for pilots in Europe. – Our Website: [www.eurocockpit.be](http://www.eurocockpit.be)*