



For aviation to thrive, Transport Ministers focus on social issues

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In a welcome display of ambition and determination, 8 Transport Ministers from across Europe signed a [joint Declaration](#) calling for a “socially responsible” aviation. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal are joining forces in an attempt to move the European Commission and their fellow-Member States towards an ambitious COVID-19 aviation recovery guided by safety, fair & undistorted competition and social rights for employees.

The Declaration highlights that the COVID-19 crisis exposes some of the deep changes and dysfunctionalities of the aviation industry, built up over the years as a result of poor regulatory efforts: a staggering legal uncertainty on applicable labour, social security and tax law, an uneven playing field within Europe’s single aviation market, different levels of protection for workers, and inadequate rule-enforcement at national level. All these pre-existing conditions – which according to the Ministers deserve ‘priority attention’ – risk impeding the industry’s recovery from the crisis.

“Our industry is in a state of high alert due to the resurgence of the Corona virus across Europe”, says ECA President Otjan de Bruijn. “Without dedicated efforts to support it now and restore it in a socially responsible manner in the near future, we are facing lasting harm to hundreds of thousands of aviation workers and their families. Yet, for the industry to thrive, we need not only the pandemic to be over but a long-term vision, which corrects the pre-existing social flaws.”

To address the aviation industry’s problems, Ministers call for a better coordination between European and National transport and social authorities, and urge for more legal certainty and effective enforcement of European and national rules. They also highlight the need to address the social dimension with the upcoming revision of the EU Air Services Regulation (Reg. 1008/2008).

“Airlines and their employees can only compete on the market and recover from the crisis if this market is free from social engineering, regulatory forum shopping, and precarious atypical employment set-ups”, says Philip von Schöppenthau, ECA Secretary General. “We hope this Declaration will find broad and firm support both in Brussels and across Europe, and we urge decision makers to make sure it is not the socially unscrupulous airlines that will come out of the crisis as the winners.”

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[Note to editors:](#) ECA is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 40.000 pilots from across Europe, striving for the highest levels of aviation safety and fostering social rights and quality employment for pilots in Europe. Website: www.eurocockpit.be & twitter [@eu_cockpit](https://twitter.com/eu_cockpit)