



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **EU Director on Civil Aviation Is Optimistic: European Air Transport Can Overcome the Crisis**

**The European Cockpit Association held its Annual General Assembly in Budapest on the 25 and 26 November. The General Assembly welcomed two new members representing the Romanian and Ukrainian pilots and elected three new Executive Board Directors: Carlos Salas (Vice President), Luis Bento (Professional Affairs) and Riku Aakkula (Technical Affairs). The General Assembly expressed their support and solidarity to the Hungarian Pilot Association, which is suffering disgraceful attempts at intimidation by their employer MALEV Hungarian Airlines.**

In his address to the ECA General Assembly, Daniel Calleja, the EU Commission's Director responsible for Civil Aviation, expressed his optimism that European air transport will overcome the crisis. Mr Calleja emphasised the importance of labour issues in the negotiations for a second stage Air Services Agreement with the United States. "I am ready to work with the stakeholders and with the Member States on a solution, in the agreement, which addresses the fundamental rights of labour." Mr Calleja further declared that "the Commission has always promoted the highest safety standards and, in that context, has asked EASA to quickly prepare proposals on flight time limitations".

At the Assembly ECA went through the annual bitter-sweet process of Executive Board renewal. Carlos Salas, the newly elected ECA Vice-President succeeding Henk de Vries declared: "Pilots are facing great challenges like fatigue risk management and training; we must reinforce the ties amongst our member associations and with the pilots in the other regions of the world to preserve the fundamentals of our profession."

Riku Aakkula (Finland) and Luis Bento (Portugal) replaced Heinz Frühwirth and Fran Hoyas who had completed their mandate. Timo Eckardt, the only Board member running for re-election was confirmed in his position of Admin and Finances Director. The General Assembly thanked Henk, Fran and Heinz with a standing ovation in recognition of their dedication and achievements.

The Hungarian pilots in Malev explained the difficult situation they are going through. The ECA President said "European airlines are aware that their success can only be built on true social partnership with key employees such as flight crew. Malev should immediately stop the unlawful and disgraceful bullying and enter an honest and respectful dialogue with their pilots".

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***Founded in 1991, ECA is the association of flight crew unions, representing more than 38,600 pilots from 38 European countries.***

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