



*"[air navigation control, [...] is a task involving the exercise of public authority and is not of an economic nature, since that activity constitutes a service in the public interest which is intended to protect both the users of air transport and the populations affected by aircraft flying over them".*  
(Extract of decision C.364/92 of the European Court of Justice).

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# 61<sup>st</sup> ATCEUC Committee Meeting Final Communiqué

ATCEUC held its 61<sup>st</sup> Committee Meeting in Catania, Italy, from 24 to 27 October, honoured by the presence of the two Italian trade union leaders, Stefano FRANCUCCI (UnICA) and Pietro SERBASSI (FAST-CONFSAL).

RP4 preparation is about to start and ATCEUC voices the same clear and strong message: this industry needs an operational approach to prepare the ATM/ANS sector for the forecasted 2025-2029 traffic evolution and challenges. Political aspirational performance targets have always turned out counterproductive.

ATCEUC has been raising awareness on staff shortages for almost a decade now. Heavy difficulties remain the same while upgrading to newer technology, capacity demand and environmental challenges are growing. The ATM/ANS industry needs proper levels of staffing and financing to accompany the development of a greener aviation sector.

Civil aviation represents 13,4% CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the total EU Transport sector. ATCEUC understands the high importance of being ambitious in the CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction targets and is committed to deliver. The ATM/ANS community has always been a frontrunner in providing efficient trajectory and optimum flight levels to minimize fuel burnt and its associated environmental consequences.

What is true for RP4 is also true for CO<sub>2</sub> and non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. ATCEUC will work to ensure that the European Commission and the European aviation community have realistic expectations for the ATM/ANS industry.

The looming prospect of extensive fiscal and budgetary austerity measures in some EU countries is poised to compound the existing difficulties related to EU/RP3 cost efficiency trajectory. The repercussions stemming from these national austerity decisions may not only imperil the

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performance and resilience of these countries but also trigger cascading network effects. ATCEUC urges for a dialogue and thorough assessment of the potentially catastrophic outcomes involving EU institutions, NM, NSAs, ANSPs, staff representatives, and the relevant member states.

ATCEUC is also concerned about recent leaks to the press of safety reports undermining the confidentiality of the safety management system in some of our member countries. The public blaming of front-line operators while doing their job is not the way to enhance safety in the system. Appropriate investigations should be conducted and measures duly taken to safeguard Just Culture in aviation.

In its 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 publication, "Impact of ATM related strikes on the European ATM network", EUROCONTROL strangely followed the path of previous Ryanair and A4E publications and attacked the ATCOs' right to strike. To avoid network disruption and difficulties for passengers, ATCEUC considers industrial action as the ultimate but justified step when social dialogue fails. The right to strike is a fundamental and constitutional right and shall remain protected for all EU workers.

Finally, the 61<sup>st</sup> Committee Meeting warmly welcomes LACA (Luxembourg) as a new Member Union and wishes the newly elected EB a productive term of work.

Catania, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023