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Position Paper

International Labour Organization report on civil aviation

The International Labour Organization's recent report on building a green, sustainable, and inclusive recovery for the Civil Aviation Sector highlights some crucial issues concerning the employment trends and working conditions of aircrews. As the leading voice of cabin crew in the European Union, EurECCA firmly believes that a sustainable and just aviation industry is possible only when the concerns of the workers are addressed and their rights are protected.

EurECCA acknowledges the ILO's findings that the current employment trends in the aviation industry often result in worse working conditions and negatively impact the safety culture of operators. EurECCA also supports the report's recommendations on addressing employment conditions that lead to precarious working conditions, particularly with regard to posting of workers, wet-lease, different tiered contracting models, lower social security protection, pay-to-fly schemes, temporary agencies, bogus self-employment, etc. Such practices not only deprive aircrews of their fundamental rights but also put the safety of passengers at risk. Similarly, these business models undermine the competency-based training and violate the basic principles of fair remuneration.

Moreover, EurECCA appreciates the report's focus on the legislative framework concerning home base and operational base rules that must be updated to reflect the emerging contracting forms in aviation and its impacts in terms of social security protections and applicable laws.

This report also emphasizes the fact that the current regulations for flight time, duty period, and rest requirements (FTL) are established to ensure only the safety of flight operations by maintaining an adequate level of alertness for the crew. EurECCA welcomes the report's focus on the fact that these regulations are only designed for the global protection of air safety and not for the individual protection of aircrews. Since its creation, EurECCA claims that FTL schemes cannot be used as working conditions as they do not take into account any health and safety approach neither any medical evaluation!

Flight Time Limitations (FTL) are a safety regulation and cannot be as a social instrument.

EurECCA also supports the ILO's call for action on fatigue, stress, psychosocial risks, security measures, cabin fume events, radiation, violence and harassment from unruly passengers. As cabin crew members, we face a range of risks and challenges that require effective policies and procedures to ensure our health and safety on board. The pandemic has further highlighted the importance of addressing the psychosocial risks and ensuring adequate support to mitigate the impact of stress and uncertainty.

In order to protect aircrews and preserve human resources, occupational safety and health measures strive to ensure safe and healthy working conditions. As mentioned in this report, the International Labour Organization (ILO) recently elevated the importance of a safe and healthy working environment to a fundamental principle and right at work. This initiative aims to promote global awareness of work-related accidents, injuries, and illnesses, prioritizes the health and safety of workers on the international agenda, and encourages practical action at all levels. For that reason, EurECCA strongly recommends the adoption of measures that ensure the protection of aircrews' rights, including their health and safety at work.

EurECCA believes that it is now essential and urgent to address all these issues in order to ensure that cabin crews can work in safe and healthy environments. The current gaps in the legal framework are being exploited by airlines to engage in precarious employment practices, which have a detrimental impact on the aircrews' physical and mental health.

It's high time for the industry to adopt a human-centric approach that prioritizes aircrews' rights and the protection of their health, safety, and well-being at work. Reason why EurECCA urges policymakers, employers, and other stakeholders to work together to create a just, fair and sustainable aviation industry that benefits all.

As EurECCA, we are committed to advocating for the rights and interests of cabin crew, and we look forward to continuing to work with ILO and other stakeholders to achieve a greener, more sustainable, and inclusive aviation sector.

EurECCA represents, protects and develops the rights and needs of all cabin crew all over Europe

Acting Together - Protecting Each Other

About EurECCA: established in Brussels in 2014, the European Cabin Crew Association, EurECCA, represents, protects and develops the rights and needs of cabin crew all over Europe. It is composed of cabin crew unions from European Union Member States as well as accession and bordering states and represents some 33,000 cabin crew accounting for 70% of all organized cabin crew in Europe. EurECCA has no political connections. EurECCA's work is around Cabin Crew working conditions, wages, social protection and health and safety at work.

[EurECCA European Cabin Crew Association AISBL](http://www.eurecca.eu)
Avenue Louise 143/4
1050 Brussels, Belgium

www.eurecca.eu
contact@eurecca.eu