



*"[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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PRESS RELEASE

SET IMMEDIATELY OUR ALBANIAN COLLEAGUES FREE!

Brussels, 8th April 2021

ATCEUC is horrified by the latest news from Albania.

Air Traffic Controllers who only last Thursday met with the President of their country to express their fears and concerns regarding their treatment at the hands of their employer Albcontrol have been summarily dismissed and then arrested.

In a country which aspires to become member of the EU it is unacceptable that essential, safety critical workers could be fired and eventually arrested simply for performing their duties in accordance with EU regulations or for airing their concerns publicly when their employer refused to listen to or engage with them, an employer that is ultimately responsible for the safety of the passengers travelling through Albanian skies.

Albcontrol has unilaterally reduced the salaries of their employees by up to 70% without consulting or even talking to the Unions which represent their workers.

Albcontrol has refused every request from the Unions to negotiate a responsible, collective agreement to resolve this crisis, a position which has put its employees under enormous additional stress in the midst of a global crisis.

How can Albania see itself as worthy of a bright new future as an EU member when its reaction to workers pursuing their fundamental rights is to act in a way reminiscent of a dark stalinist past that we hoped had been buried, and arrest those who oppose them? This is even more troubling,

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when the Controllers are NOT acting politically but performing their duties according to both National and European Regulations.

EU membership demands that Albania respects not just European Regulations but also the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Pillar of Social Rights, it must leave behind all the old ways of the past and fully embrace the rights of workers and its responsibilities towards aviation safety of the broader European communities (i.e. Council of Europe, E.C.A.C.) of which they are member.

ATCEUC demands that every EU institution with dealings in Albania use their fullest influence to help Albania see that arresting its citizens who are simply fulfilling their duties and rights according to National and European Law instead of entering a meaningful and constructive dialogue with them could be seen as a sign that it is not ready to join the European Union and that their release and reinstatement is a fundamental step on the path to full EU membership.

ATCEUC has lost all contact with our Albanian colleagues and is deeply upset by this development and concerned for their welfare, we demand that the Albanian authorities release our colleagues immediately.

END OF PRESS RELEASE

Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC) was created in 1989 and is currently composed of 32 professional and autonomous trade unions representing more than 14000 Air Traffic Controllers (ATCOs) and Air Traffic Safety Electronics Personnel (ATSEPs) throughout Europe. ATCEUC is part of the "European Union Sectoral Social Dialogue - Civil Aviation" in the air traffic management field and it is recognised as a full member of the ICB. ATCEUC with its experts participates in every work group where the voice of its Members can and have to be expressed: SESAR JU, TSG, EGHD, EASA STeB, EASC, ASPReT, ATM Partners and other workshops or programmes within the framework of EUROCONTROL and the European Commission.