

**Declaration by Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg,  
The Netherlands, Portugal and Spain**

**COVID-19 Recovery: Towards Socially Responsible Connectivity**

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The COVID-19 crisis is heavily impacting the aviation sector and its workers. It puts the spotlight on the deep changes the sector witnessed over the past years: the increase of atypical forms of aircrew employment, such as through agencies, self-employment or pay-to-fly schemes, and the multiplication of operational bases in different jurisdictions. These developments could pose major challenges to national authorities, air carriers and aircrew alike: legal uncertainty – including on the applicable labour, social security and tax law, an uneven playing field for air carriers, different levels of protection for workers, and inadequate rule-enforcement at national level. This situation deserves priority attention – especially at times of crisis.

We therefore welcome the initiatives undertaken so far by the European Commission, Member States and aviation stakeholders<sup>1</sup>, and call on European Commissioners Adina-Ioana Vălean and Nicolas Schmit as well as Member States to implement the recommendations of the expert group on social matters related to aircrews.

We express our common goal of fostering socially responsible air connectivity in Europe, where social rights are safeguarded, safety is further enhanced and competition is based on fair conditions rather than on dumping practices – which is also a prerequisite to attract, train and keep highly skilled professionals. In order to achieve this, better coordination between European and National transport and social authorities is urgently needed. Legal certainty and effective enforcement of European and national rules will be key for achieving socially responsible and sustainable connectivity, including the requirement to know which labour law is applicable to air crews. The social dimension should also be addressed when revising Regulation 1008/2008.

To come out of this unprecedented crisis stronger and more resilient depends on ensuring healthy and fair competition and on providing socially responsible connectivity for Europe’s travelling public. To achieve this, we call upon the European Commission to take active leadership, and we commit to playing our part in our respective countries as well as at EU level, in close coordination with the Commission, Member States, the European Labour Authority, and within the Expert Group on social matters related to aircrews.

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<sup>1</sup> Such as: Ministerial statement ‘The Social Agenda in Aviation – Towards Socially Responsible Connectivity’ (10/2018, joined by Austria in 2019); EU Commission report ‘Maintaining and promoting high social standards’ in European aviation (03/2019) and in-depth study on atypical air crew employment (01/2019) and Workshop on ‘socially responsible air transport’ (04/2019); Member States’ expert group on ‘social matters related to aircrews’ (2019-).

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