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Ground Handling Newsletter

The ETF Ground Handling campaign is on cruising speed

The ETF Ground Handling campaign is gathering common efforts from unions representing ground handling (GH) workers at European airports. It has proven its efficacy and keeps growing in intensity. The latest news regarding the revision of the GH Directive is pointing towards a more liberalised market without the social provisions demanded by the ETF via the campaign. Despite the remarkable achievement of having signed a joint statement with airports' and ground handlers' employers in the framework of the Social Dialogue – a statement formulating the agreement that the transfer of staff in case of tenders and in case of partial loss of activity during the licence concession's period needs a clear solution for the benefit of the whole industry – the EC's draft proposal is not including sufficient provisions in this respect.

Final opportunities to influence the draft proposal

On 6th of June, a delegation from ETF, ACI (Airports Council International) and ASA (Airport Services Association) met with Commissioner Sim Kallas, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of transport. The two employers' organisations emphasised together with the ETF the need for a solution to stabilise the market and to provide the intended quality levels. However, the Commission's proposal still insists on keeping a competition that is based on reducing the final price of services by allowing to cut costs on labour. On the 15th of September, the signatory parties of the joint statement organised another meeting with Commissioner Sim Kallas in which the need for clear social provisions was reiterated. The ETF also met with Armindo Silva (Director EMPL/B, DG Employment) and will have another meeting with Commissioner Laszlo Andor (DG Employment) on the 21st of October. It is one of the last opportunities to try influencing the final text of the proposal (expected on the 30th of November).

Commission presents draft proposal to GSC



On 28 September, Mrs Emmanuelle Maire (Head of Unit of Airports, DG MOVE.E.4) presented to the Ground Staff Committee the content of the

Draft proposal with regards to the ETF Campaign's demands. The GSC welcomed the efforts made to meet some of the demands on safety standards, subcontracting and the exemption of airports from tenders. However, the draft is far from satisfactory regarding the social demands of the ETF, especially on the request about transfer of staff after a partial loss of activity during the licence's concession's period. It was also noted that the proposal gives a weak basis for the transfer of staff after a tender procedure as it says that Member States *may* require that the new supplier takes the staff from the former incumbent.

Therefore, the ETF GSC has decided to speed-up the campaign's pace in the light of the poor social protection provisions included in the draft. On the one hand, it has been decided to start the lobby process with all the actors involved in this new stage of the revision's process (National Parliaments, MEPs, COREPER and EESC mainly), and on the other hand to organise some first degree of Europe-wide actions. On 14 November, mass meetings will take place in many airports from 09:30 to 11:30. This can be considered as a «pre-warning» exercise.

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