

PRESS RELEASE

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Passengers face new delays and at least 200 cancellations during latest Air Traffic Control (ATC) strike in France

- Since 2004, two-thirds of all European ATC strike days took place in France.
- ATC strikes in France decrease the connectivity of other Member States.
- Upcoming French mobility summit should develop measures to reduce damage to economy.

At least 200 flight cancellations and many delays have resulted from the latest ATC strike in Europe. In particular, control centres in Reims and Marseille have been on strike since Monday evening, forcing airlines to reduce their flight offerings in France and also services overflying France. The strike will continue until Wednesday morning.

“With two-thirds of all European ATC strike days taking place in France, European and French policy-makers need to implement measures capable of minimising Air Traffic Management disruption’s impact on travellers. More than 250 strike days since 2004 are enough - we cannot allow these well-paid air traffic controllers to restrict the rights of millions of European passengers”, said Thomas Reynaert, Managing Director of A4E.

A4E calls on the French government to use its upcoming “Assises de la mobilité” (National Mobility Summit) on 19 September to identify new priorities in terms of mobility and transport and to consider measures capable of improving the predictability of strikes’ impact and decrease their damage to the French and European economy.

“Given France’s geographical location, ATC strikes in France and a consequential partial closure or the reduction of capacity in French airspace considerably decrease the potential for overflights in French airspace, and decreases the connectivity of and with other Member States”, added Thomas Reynaert.



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In June, the European Commission published its Communication “Aviation: an Open and Connected Europe” in an effort to enhance airspace efficiency and connectivity. The Commission rightly encourages Member States and stakeholders, including social partners, to take action to improve service continuity in air traffic management. Political, operational and technological solutions exist for a problem that affects the whole continent. Limiting the impact of Air Traffic Management strikes on travellers and business, without questioning controllers’ fundamental right to strike, is a key objective of A4E.

Solutions A4E has called for encompass the compulsory minimum of 72 hours notification of participation in a strike, which should be implemented by European States where possible and practical, and an upper airspace evolution away from geographical dependency enabling European passengers to make uninterrupted journeys throughout the continent.

During the 2010-16 period, there were 217 ATC strike days in the EU - one disrupted day every nine days. In total, there were 278 disrupted days if you take into account the days before and after an ATC strike as flights had to be cancelled in advance and accumulated delays spilt over to the next day. Since 2010 the overall impact of ATC strikes have cost €12 billion to the EU economy, associated with more than 140,000 jobs.

About A4E:

Airlines for Europe (A4E) is Europe’s largest airline association, based in Brussels. Launched in January 2016, the association consists of Aegean, airBaltic, Air France KLM, Cargolux, easyJet, Finnair, Icelandair, International Airlines Group (IAG), Jet2.com, Lufthansa Group, Norwegian, Ryanair, TAP Portugal, Travel Service and Volotea, and plans to grow further. With more than 550 million passengers on board each year, A4E members account for more than 70 per cent of the continent’s journeys, operating more than 2,700 airplanes and generating more than EUR 100 billion in annual turnover.

