

French air traffic control strike begins tonight, more than 550+ flights cancelled

- 35-hour national strike will disrupt ATC and other public sector services beginning 08 May at 17:00 UTC (19:00 local time) until 04:00 UTC (06:00 local time) 10 May
- At least 75,000 travellers directly impacted, with further cancellations and major delays expected
- A4E wants greater predictability on the impact and scale of ATC strikes through adoption of its recommended solutions in its [Free Movement Call for Action](#)

Brussels, 08 May 2019 – Airlines for Europe (A4E) airlines and their passengers are bracing for the third national air traffic control (ATC) strike in Europe so far this year, with French ATC services disrupted for 35 hours beginning tonight at 19:00 local time through 06:00 local time on 10 May as part of a national public sector strike. The French Civil Aviation Authority (DGAC) has asked airlines flying to and from several airports in France to reduce their flight schedules by 30 per cent in advance of the strike, forcing the cancellation of around 550 flights by A4E airlines and directly impacting around 75,000 passengers. Major delays, re-routings and further cancellations are to be expected.

In May 2018, a similar public sector strike in France caused the cancellation of around 900 flights by A4E airlines, part of a record year in which travellers were subjected to some 30 ATC strike days in total – 22 of which originated in France. That represents 75% of all ATC strikes in Europe last year.

“Politicians must act immediately to protect the rights of consumers and prevent long term damage to European economies. A4E is urging French policymakers, in particular, to improve the predictability of traffic strikes’ impact. By putting in place a 72-hour individual notification requirement for employees wishing to strike, passengers would be better informed about the expected disruptions to their journeys. A better protection of overflights (while not at the expense of the country where the strike originates) is also imperative and long overdue. For years, our calls to implement these solutions have unfortunately gone unanswered and millions of EU passengers have seen their travel plans ruined. We remain hopeful, however, that progress can still be made -- particularly in France”, said Thomas Reynaert, Managing Director, A4E.

ATC strikes continue to have a costly impact on tourism, European economies and the environment:

1. Customers’ journeys and supply chains are severely disrupted.
2. Unnecessary additional CO2 emissions are caused by the diversions to avoid closed air space, resulting in longer flights and more fuel burn.
3. Tourism is most affected due to cancelled flights to holiday destinations, putting small and medium size businesses at risk.
4. A PwC study* estimates ATC strikes have cost the EU economy €13.4 billion since 2010.
5. Airlines have to pay passengers compensation for the delays and rebook them on other flights, significantly disrupting customers’ travel plans and the airlines’ operations. Airlines don’t have the right to recover these costs from the air navigation service providers who have caused them.

6. Tour operators have to offer alternative travel arrangements and possible refunds for services not performed according to contract, which can be significant when re-routing in high season is more difficult.

*"Economic Impact of Air Traffic Control Strikes in Europe", PriceWaterhouseCooper for A4E, Brussels, 2016

About A4E

Launched in 2016, Airlines for Europe (A4E) is Europe's largest airline association, based in Brussels. The organisation advocates on behalf of its members to help shape EU aviation policy to the benefit of consumers, ensuring a continued safe and competitive air transport market. With more than 700 million passengers carried each year, A4E members account for more than 70 per cent of the continent's journeys, operating more than 2,900 aircraft and generating more than EUR 110 billion in annual turnover. Members with air cargo and mail activities transport more than 5 million tons of goods each year to more than 360 destinations either by freighters or passenger aircraft. Current members include Aegean, airBaltic, Air France-KLM, Cargolux, easyJet, Finnair, Icelandair, International Airlines Group (IAG), Jet2.com, Lufthansa Group, Norwegian, Ryanair, TAP Air Portugal, Smartwings and Volotea.