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Position Paper

Strengthening the European Labour Authority:

Ensuring effective protection of Cabin Crew in the EU internal market

The **European Cabin Crew Association (EurECCA)** welcomes the European Commission's Call for Evidence on the strengthening of the European Labour Authority through a review of its mandate. EurECCA considers this initiative a crucial opportunity to address long-standing enforcement gaps affecting mobile workers, and in particular cabin crew, whose employment conditions remain characterised by legal uncertainty, fragmented oversight and persistent risks of social dumping.

Cabin crew are, by the very nature of their work, among the most mobile workers in the European Union. They operate permanently across borders, are subject to complex employment structures, and are often employed under contractual arrangements that combine elements of posting, agency work, wet leasing such as ACMI, subcontracting and atypical forms of employment. Despite this reality, the aviation sector – and cabin crew in particular – continues to represent a structural blind spot in the effective application and enforcement of EU labour law and social security coordination rules.

EurECCA recalls that Regulation (EU) 2019/1149 establishing the **European Labour Authority** was designed to support fair labour mobility, ensure consistent enforcement of EU law and protect mobile workers. However, experience since its entry into force clearly demonstrates that the current mandate and operational scope of ELA are insufficient to address the specific challenges faced by cabin crew. These include uncertainty regarding applicable labour law, disputes over social security affiliation, artificial designation of home bases, use of letterbox companies, and the systematic fragmentation of employer responsibility across borders.

In this context, EurECCA stresses that the forthcoming revision of Regulation (EU) 2019/1149 must not be limited to horizontal or procedural adjustments. It must also result in a clear political and legal recognition that sectors characterised by permanent cross-border mobility, such as civil aviation, require targeted and reinforced enforcement mechanisms. Strengthening ELA without explicitly integrating cabin crew within its operational priorities would risk perpetuating existing enforcement failures.



EurECCA therefore calls for the revised Regulation to explicitly confirm that cabin crew fall fully within the scope of ELA's mandate in relation to labour mobility, posting of workers, social security coordination and the fight against social dumping. This clarification is essential to ensure that national authorities, labour inspectorates and social partners can rely on ELA's support when addressing complex cross-border aviation cases.

Furthermore, EurECCA strongly supports a reinforcement of ELA's role in concerted and joint inspections, with specific relevance to the aviation sector. The revised mandate should enable ELA to actively facilitate and coordinate inspections covering multi-base operations and transnational employment structures typical of airlines. The ability to collect, process and retain inspection-related data is particularly important in aviation, where abusive practices often emerge only when information from several Member States is analysed collectively.

In line with EurECCA's long-standing positions on social dumping in European aviation, the Authority's analytical and risk-assessment functions should also be strengthened and explicitly oriented towards operational realities. Sector-specific analyses addressing the misuse of subcontracting, wet leasing, temporary agency work and bogus self-employment in aviation would significantly enhance preventive enforcement and contribute to restoring a level playing field within the internal market.

EurECCA also underlines the importance of accessible, accurate and sector-specific information for cabin crew. Despite being EU mobile workers, cabin crew often lack effective access to clear information regarding their rights and obligations. A reinforced ELA mandate should therefore ensure the development of tailored information tools that genuinely reflect the realities of mobile aviation work, in close cooperation with social partners.

The role of social partners is central in this regard. EurECCA recalls that collective expertise and on-the-ground knowledge of cabin crew representatives are indispensable to understanding enforcement gaps and identifying abusive practices. The revised Regulation should therefore strengthen structured cooperation between ELA and all European social partners, ensuring their meaningful involvement in inspections, analytical work and policy development related to labour mobility in aviation.

EurECCA fully supports the continued use of Articles 46 and 48 TFEU as the legal basis for the revision of the Regulation. The challenges faced by cabin crew are inherently cross-border and cannot be effectively addressed by Member States acting in isolation. Only a reinforced European Labour Authority, equipped with a clear mandate and adequate tools, can ensure consistent enforcement, legal certainty and effective protection for mobile workers in aviation.



In conclusion, EurECCA considers that the revision of Regulation (EU) 2019/1149 must result in a genuinely strengthened European Labour Authority that is capable of addressing the realities of aviation sector. Explicitly extending and reinforcing ELA's role and mandate with regard to cabin crew would represent a concrete and necessary step towards fair labour mobility, effective enforcement of EU law and the prevention of social dumping in European aviation. EurECCA stands ready to contribute constructively to this process and to cooperate with the Commission and ELA in shaping a framework that delivers tangible protection for cabin crew.

EurECCA stands for fair skies and fair work

FLYING TOGETHER – PROTECTING EACH OTHER

About EurECCA: established in Brussels in 2014, the European Cabin Crew Association, EurECCA, represents, protects and develops the rights and needs of cabin crew all over Europe. It is composed of cabin crew unions from European Union Member States as well as accession and bordering states and represents some 50,000 cabin crew in Europe. EurECCA has no political connections. EurECCA's work is around Cabin Crew working conditions, wages, social protection and health and safety at work.

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