



Brussels, 03/05/2023

Position Paper

EurECCA calls for a specific Directive on Health and Safety at Work for Aircrews

EurECCA, the European Cabin Crew Association, advocates for the establishment of a specific Directive on Health and Safety at work for aircrews, recognizing the unique challenges faced by this sector.

This position paper details the need for an individual Directive under Article 16 of the framework Directive 89/391/EEC and urges the European Commission to issue a proposal accordingly.

Background:

The current Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) framework Directive 89/391/EEC aims to cover all workplaces but leaves room for individual Directives that cater to specific workplace environments. However, the framework Directive 89/391/EEC does not address the particular needs of cabin crews, who operate in a distinctive environment but its Article 16 outlines the procedure for adopting individual Directives based on the proposal from the European Commission. These individual Directives serve to amend the general scope of the framework Directive by addressing more stringent and/or specific provisions in various areas such as workplaces, work equipment, personal protective equipment, handling of heavy loads, and temporary or mobile work sites.

Reasons and justifications for a Specific Directive for Aircrews:

This individual Directive for aircrews would give substance to Clauses 5 and 6 of Council Directive 2000/79/EC, ensuring appropriate safety and health protection for mobile staff in civil aviation and adapting work patterns to workers' needs.

Clause 5:

1. Mobile staff in civil aviation will have safety and health protection appropriate to the nature of their work.
2. Adequate protection and prevention services or facilities with regard to the safety and health of mobile staff in civil aviation will be available at all times.

Clause 6:

Necessary measures will be taken to ensure that an employer, who intends to organise work according to a certain pattern, takes account of the **general principle of adapting work to the worker**.

However, the lack of a specific EU Directive addressing the unique environment of the airplane prevents appropriate authorities from effectively overseeing OH&S incidents and accidents that occur in this context.

EurECCA acknowledges the economic pressures faced by the aviation sector but believes that efficiency should not come at the cost of degrading cabin crew's working conditions, health, and safety.

EurECCA calls upon the European Commission to:

- Issue a proposal for an individual Directive under Article 16 of the framework Directive on health and safety at work (Directive 89/391/EEC), specifically tailored to the needs of cabin crews and the unique environment in which they work.
- Ensure that the proposed Directive gives substance to Clause 5 and Clause 6 of Council Directive 2000/79/EC, providing adequate protection and prevention services for the safety and health of mobile staff in civil aviation.
- Engage relevant stakeholders, including cabin crews' representatives, in the development of the proposed Directive to ensure it accurately addresses the needs and challenges faced by the sector.
- Establish a robust monitoring and enforcement mechanism for the proposed Directive, enabling appropriate authorities to effectively oversee and address OH&S incidents and accidents occurring in the airplane environment and track the recurrent illness, such as cancers, sleep and metabolic disorders, mental and psychic health as well as cognitive performances, relevant to cabin crews to establish a list of work-related diseases.

Furthermore, in June 2022, the International Labour Conference (ILC) decided to include “**a safe and healthy working environment**” in the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) framework of **fundamental principles and rights at work**. This decision underlines the importance of addressing the distinct needs of aircrews to ensure their health and safety. By establishing a specific Directive for aircrews, the European Commission would align with this global commitment and address the unique challenges faced by cabin crew members in the aviation industry.

The establishment of a specific Directive on Health and Safety at work for aircrews is now essential and more than urgent to ensure the well-being of cabin crew members. By taking this crucial step, the European Commission will not only fulfil its obligations under the existing OH&S framework but also contribute to a safer, healthier, and more sustainable aviation sector. EurECCA urges the European Commission to prioritize the health and safety of cabin crews and issue a proposal for an individual Directive as soon as possible.

EurECCA represents, protects and develops the rights and needs of all cabin crew all over Europe

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 33,000 cabin crew accounting for 70% of all organized 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.