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Position Paper

Ensuring a “Just Transition” for cabin crew in aviation’s green shift

EurECCA welcomes the European Union’s commitment to environmental sustainability in aviation, as outlined in the **European Aviation Environmental Report 2025¹ (EAER) by EASA**. However, the report fails to address the critical social impacts of these policies on cabin crew or employees in general, who are an essential part of aviation operations.

While EurECCA supports ambitious measures to reduce aviation’s environmental footprint, we firmly believe that a just and fair transition must be ensured to safeguard employment conditions, job security, and social standards for cabin crew. European airlines must not be unfairly disadvantaged by regulatory measures that do not apply to non-EU competitors.

Key concerns and recommendations

1. Ensuring a level playing field for EU carriers

Challenge: The EAER highlights ambitious climate targets but does not address the risk of competitive distortions between EU and non-EU carriers. European airlines will bear higher operational costs due to SAF mandates, the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), and stricter environmental regulations, while non-EU carriers face fewer constraints.

EurECCA demands:

- **Harmonization of global environmental policies** to ensure that all airlines operating in EU airspace comply with **equal sustainability standards**.
- Implementation of **border adjustment mechanisms** (similar to the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism in other industries) to **prevent social dumping** by non-EU airlines benefiting from looser environmental policies.²³⁴

¹ <https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/domains/environment/eaer>

² <https://a4e.eu/publications/regulation-establishing-a-carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism-cbam-proposed-amendments/>

³ <https://www.ishkaglobal.com/Savi/Article/7445/Why-non-EU-airlines-flying-to-Europe-could-face-EU-carbon-tariffs>

⁴ <https://www.feport.eu/media-corner/news/general-news/1324-european-parliament-adopts-cbam-and-ets-in-aviation-and-shipping-brussels>



2. Protecting cabin crew employment and working conditions

Challenge: Airlines may respond to increased environmental costs by cutting labour expenses, potentially leading to:

- **More precarious contracts such atypical forms of employment** (e.g., temporary work agency, bogus self-employment, wet leasing, interoperability).
- **Increased workload** without corresponding salary and/or rest adjustments.
- **Cost-cutting** on cabin crew by **extending duty schedules**, adding further pressure on already challenging working conditions.

EurECCA demands:

- **Employment protection clauses** in EU aviation sustainability policies, ensuring that environmental measures do not lead to job losses or wage reductions.
- Mandatory **collective labour agreements** in all EU airlines to **prevent unfair cost-cutting measures at the expense of crew salaries and working conditions**.
- Inclusion of **social impact assessments** in future environmental regulations to evaluate **how this induced cost pressure affects employment and working conditions in the aviation sector**.
- Inclusion of **work-life balance safeguards** in operational changes linked to environmental regulations (e.g., SAF refuelling times, new aircraft configurations).

3. Just and fair transition policies for cabin crew

Challenge: The EAER emphasizes the transition towards **new aircraft technologies (hydrogen, electric, SAF-powered)** but fails to consider the **impact on cabin crew safety training and career security**.

EurECCA demands:

- **EU-funded training and reskilling programs** for cabin crew, ensuring they are prepared for the shift to next-generation aircraft.
- **Recognition of cabin crew as essential aviation workers**, ensuring safety on board during industry transitions.
- **Social dialogue mechanisms** involving trade unions and worker representatives in regulatory discussions about the green transition.



4. Addressing health and safety concerns

Challenge: The report acknowledges increased **airport noise, air pollution, and climate adaptation challenges**, but does not address the **health and safety risks for cabin crew**.

EurECCA demands:

- **Stronger regulations on air quality in aircraft**, protecting cabin crew from excessive exposure to **ultrafine particles and toxic fumes events/incidents**.
- Research on the **impact of sustainable fuels and new propulsion systems on in-flight air quality** and cabin crew **long-term health**.
- That the acknowledged consequences should not have negative impact on cabin crew with regards to hotel accommodation and crew rest

5. Strengthening social standards in EU environmental aviation policies

Challenge: Despite its ambitious environmental goals, **the EAER 2025 does not include any clear framework for protecting cabin crew**. In other industries affected by climate policies, such as energy and manufacturing, "**Just Transition**" mechanisms have been implemented to safeguard workers. Aviation, however, has been **excluded from these social protection measures**⁵⁶⁷.

EurECCA demands:

- A "**Just Transition**" framework for aviation workers, similar to those in other sectors affected by climate policies (e.g., energy and manufacturing) with the consultation of all stakeholders.
- **Mandatory social impact assessments** before implementing environmental regulations.

A sustainable aviation's future must be socially responsible.

EurECCA supports green aviation policies but insists that sustainability must not come at the cost of fair working conditions and social protections for cabin crew. A competitive and sustainable EU aviation sector must ensure equal regulations for all carriers, safeguard employment, and guarantee that the shift to greener aviation is a fair transition for all cabin crew.

We call on EASA, the European Commission, and Parliament to:

1. **Ensure a level playing field** between EU and non-EU airlines.
2. **Protect cabin crew jobs, wages, and working conditions**.
3. **Provide reskilling programs** for the transition to new aircraft.
4. **Implement stronger health and safety measures** for cabin crew.
5. **Integrate social standards into aviation climate policies**.

⁵ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/finance-and-green-deal/just-transition-mechanism_en

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/itm>

⁷ <https://www.housingeurope.eu/just-transition-mechanism-2/>



Without **fair labour policies**, environmental measures will lead to **worsening conditions for European cabin crews**, undermining both **social justice and the sustainability of the aviation industry**.

EurECCA remains committed to engaging in discussions with EU policymakers to ensure a just and fair transition for all cabin crews.

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 23,000 cabin crew accounting for 60% 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.

EurECCA European Cabin Crew Association AISBL
Avenue Louise 143/4
1050 Brussels, Belgium

www.eurecca.eu
contact@eurecca.eu