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EurECCA Position Paper
Europe must stand up for its Cabin Crew

Response to the European Commission Work Programme 2027
COM(2026) 710 final

1. Cabin crew in the 2027 Work Programme

With its 2027 Work Programme, "European Union – standing up for one another", the European Commission places solidarity alongside competitiveness and European independence. For EurECCA, the European Cabin Crew Association, this commitment must reach the people whose work keeps Europe connected. Cabin crew need a European aviation market in which fair employment, effective social protection and healthy working conditions are integral to economic success.

The programme offers important opportunities, particularly through its prioritisation of the Fair Labour Mobility Package. It also leaves significant questions unanswered about the social future of aviation. Its credibility will depend on whether Europe's ambitions translate into tangible protection aboard aircraft and across borders.

2. Fair mobility requires enforceable rights

EurECCA welcomes the inclusion of the European Labour Authority mandate revision and the European Social Security Pass, ESSPASS, among the Commission's priority pending proposals.

For cabin crew, cross-border employment is an everyday reality. Recruitment, contractual arrangements, operational activity and social security affiliation can involve several countries. When responsibilities become fragmented, individuals can struggle to establish their rights, while authorities face difficulties identifying and addressing abuse.

A stronger European Labour Authority must help close these enforcement gaps. Civil aviation needs effective cooperation between competent authorities, meaningful involvement of social partners and the capacity to investigate employment structures across borders.

ESSPASS should reinforce this work through an interoperable European architecture that makes social security information accessible and verifiable. Digitalisation must enable authorities to examine the reality behind the documents. It must also make it easier for cabin crew to understand their coverage and exercise their rights.

3. Aviation competitiveness needs a social foundation

The programme does not expressly identify the revision of Regulation 1008/2008 among its named initiatives or priority pending proposals. This absence provides no certainty about the future timetable, but the underlying challenges remain.

EurECCA continues to call for an operational base definition reflecting the regular, stable and continuous reality of an airline's activity. The organisation of a business must not allow the actual centre of cabin crew professional activity to be concealed behind artificial arrangements.

Wet leasing and ACMI operations likewise require effective oversight and clear accountability for employment and social obligations. European ownership and effective control requirements must be maintained. A resilient aviation sector depends on responsible operators competing within a credible and enforceable framework.

5. The aircraft must be recognised as a workplace

The programme's social commitments must also address the conditions in which cabin crew perform their duties.

Fatigue, fume events, psychosocial pressures and occupational exposure require a coherent response. Operational safety rules alone cannot fulfil every aspect of occupational health and employment protection. EurECCA reiterates its call for a specific occupational health and safety framework for aircrew under the architecture of Directive 89/391/EEC.

The announced European Heatwave Plan provides a concrete opportunity to consider conditions aboard aircraft during boarding, ground delays and turnaround operations. Cabin crew protection must be included in that assessment.

Working time must reflect the full range of duties performed. Operational rest and social rest serve distinct purposes, and every overlap between them should be prohibited.

6. A transition shaped with cabin crew

The forthcoming ReFuelEU Aviation initiative and the Commission's focus on artificial intelligence in transport will help shape the sector's future. Environmental and technological change must be accompanied by assessment of employment effects, access to training and meaningful consultation with cabin crew representatives.

As Europe marks the tenth anniversary of the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2027, cabin crew should be able to see what those principles mean in their working lives.

Standing up for one another means ensuring that European integration delivers fair competition, enforceable rights and a healthy workplace for everyone who keeps Europe flying.

FLYING TOGETHER – PROTECTING EACH OTHER

About EurECCA: Established in Brussels in 2014, the European Cabin Crew Association represents cabin crew across Europe. Its member unions work on employment conditions, social protection and occupational health and safety.

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