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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Commission has lost touch with reality on the SES**

The 16 September speech by Commissioner Siim Kallas to EU Ministers of Transport in Vilnius on SES2+ gave a clear message: everyone must follow without questioning the European Commission's vision on the future of European Air Traffic Management, because those at the EC know better. You are either with the EC, or against.

ATCEUC, and the member states, received the message and we respectfully disagree. The stakeholders can and do have a different vision, one that we communicated to the EC on several occasions without any effect. We were simply ignored. The SES is and will continue to be an achievable project only if it takes into account the valid inputs of all stakeholders and not only airline views.

ATCEUC rejects the assumptions and arguments presented by Mr Kallas because they are not supported by any conclusive studies. He warns of a looming disaster if SES2+ is not approved, predicting chaos and collapse of the European aviation system. Perhaps the Commissioner forgets that air traffic increased more than 80% between 1990 and 2010, while delays decreased by 45% in the same period, clearly showing the ATM industry ability to cope accordingly, relying exclusively on its own expertise, hard work, collaboration and achievable targets. Today the targets set by the EC in SES2+ are impossible and dangerous and they do not take into account the economic crisis and the subsequent reduction of air traffic.

Eurocontrol has consistently failed to correctly predict, within reasonable limits, the number of IFR flight movements across the European airspace. Based on Eurocontrol figures, the EC indicates that the European airspace will reach 14.4 million flights by 2035, when actually this same estimate was made by Eurocontrol in 2008 for the traffic levels of 2018. It is clear that the Commission's predictions of an ATM disaster are based on false data, which additionally ignore other factors of inefficiency, such as out of date airport infrastructures and SESAR, which has yet to deliver despite billions of euros invested by the EU member states and companies.

In its lively propaganda, the EC systematically compares the European airspace with the US airspace, manipulating figures to prove that fragmentation in Europe is responsible for €5 billion in inefficiencies, that are borne by the airlines and ultimately by passengers. This is again an entirely wrong conclusion based on false facts. The USA is a single country, whilst the EU has to deal with 28 states, different realities and



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necessities. One cannot say that the US Congress is more efficient than the European Parliament just because it is less expensive and it has less persons. Additionally, a large part of the US system is paid by taxpayers, in contrast to what happens in the EU, where the ATM cost is entirely self-financed, totally independent from national budgets and it amounts only to 6,2% of the airline operating costs.

Concerning FABs, ATCEUC insists that operational inefficiencies can only be solved with an operational approach and not with a political one. The solution is not to enforce yet another regulation prepared by the EC bureaucracy, but to promote a cooperative approach based on customers' needs.

This opinion is also shared by the Air Navigation Service Providers of the countries represented in FABEC ( ANA - Luxembourg, Belgocontrol - Belgium, DFS - Germany , DSNA - France , LVNL - Holland, MUAC - EUROCONTROL and Skyguide - Switzerland) , one of the busiest airspaces across Europe ( 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup> and 5.5 million flights per year).They have demanded Brussels that the vision established for the package SES2 + be revised to make way for a package fair, enforceable and which takes into account the multiple interdependencies between operating costs, quality of service and safety . This has been the stakeholders motto, even before the Commissioner's mandate.

It's clear now, after Vilnius meeting, that EC and Commissioner Kallas are getting more and more isolated, by Member States, ANSPs and Staff regarding SES2+.

ATCEUC calls on the EC and Commissioner Kallas to rethink their plans on SES2+ and to base them on reality instead of fiction.

ATCEUC will always be here, ready for open and sincere dialogue.

**ATCEUC Executive Board**

Aix-en-Provence

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