

Demonstration calls for a “social” ground handling regulation across Europe

More than 500 aviation workers from across Europe gathered outside the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, to voice their concerns about a proposed European Union regulation on ground handling. It is believed that the proposal aims to further liberalise ground handling services.

Organised by the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), the ITF's European arm, the demonstration took place on 5 July. It aimed to persuade members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to include strong social provisions in any new ground handling regulation. The unionists want to see, for example, guarantees on jobs, wages and working conditions for ground handling workers; they believe that to preserve the quality of services, attempts to open up the market in ground handling further must be resisted.

“We know that the MEP responsible for this dossier, Mr Zasada, is planning to finalise soon his report in which he proposes a further opening of the ground handling market. The ETF is of the opinion that Mr Zasada's proposals will only serve the airlines' predatory greed and we fully oppose his vision on ground handling,” stated Enrique Carmona, president of the ETF civil aviation section. François Ballester, ETF political secretary said: “The ETF requests an obligation to apply a representative collective agreement and a ban on subcontracting to prevent wage dumping and cut-throat competition. This demonstration was a big success and showed the importance of this issue for the workers. It can be considered a first warning exercise”.