

Joint statement of Social Partners in Civil Aviation to address gender balance in aviation

The social partners in civil aviation, having met in Brussels on 7/11/2024,

- insisting that 'equality between men and women' is a fundamental principle of the European Union (TFEU); gender equality is a core value of the EU, a fundamental right and key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- supporting Article 23 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights that requires equality between men and women to be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay;
- taking into account the EU Gender Equality Acquis and the Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025;
- recognising that achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women is one of the United Nations Sustainable Goals by 2030;
- taking note of the conclusions of the ILO Technical meeting on a green, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery of 24-28 April 2023,¹ that the Aviation sector experiences gender imbalances throughout the employment cycle including, among others, in regard to recruitment, development opportunities and wage gaps;
- taking note of the La Hulpe Declaration on the Future of the European Pillar of Social Rights of 16 April 2024,² which recognises the important progress made to advance gender equality at the EU level, which should be reinforced to overcome all remaining obstacles to gender equality and ensure the full realisation of women's rights;
- supporting point No.17 of the above-mentioned declaration in its call for continued action to tackle gender segregation and to close the gender employment, pay, pension and care gaps and for necessary measures to eliminate gender stereotypes;
- welcoming the successful examples of public and private companies integrating gender balance policies in their attraction and retention work streams;³
- being aware that though cabin crew and customer-facing jobs at airports are predominantly female, the numbers of women in other fields of aviation are significantly lower:
 - the global number of women pilots in 2018 was 7,409, representing 5.2% of the total number of pilots;⁴
 - in ATM, women's representation within the ATCO and ATSEP workforce is at 25% and 16%;⁵
 - women are significantly underrepresented in maintenance and ground handling;
- agreeing that the issue of Gender Balance in aviation should be considered a high priority for all stakeholders involved in the aviation sector and that the sharing and use of best practices could play a key role in the process of raising the number of women in aviation, and in facilitating the implementation of policies of attraction and retention of women in aviation;

- being aware that the need to reconcile family and work life is one of the key barriers for women joining the aviation sector and staying there;
- acknowledging that role models can help address social stereotypes which contribute to limiting the number of women considering aviation as a sector to develop their career;
- understanding that addressing these gaps and imbalances would support the realisation of fundamental principles and rights;

Hereby commit to:

- promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all, especially women, in their respective company and/or organisational practices through policies that provide fair access for women to career progression and leadership positions;
- promote the profession amongst girls and women, in particular technical and accredited professions in the aviation sector. For example, by 1) offering workshops and conferences dedicated to the attraction of women in aviation, 2) visiting schools and universities and providing lectures and workshops, 3) offering other measures of reaching out to prospective youth;
- promote social and media campaigns to tackle social stereotypes that exist in the field of aviation;
- promote support programmes for women, for example, apprentice programmes and other type of encouragement and support;⁶
- establish gender-responsive work organisation measures and policies, such as, but not limited to,
 - 1) offering women flexible work hours with adherence to FTL rules and fatigue management;
 - 2) offering part-time job arrangements,
 - 3) addressing maternity needs,⁷
 - 4) promoting a culture of trust within the company,
 - 5) promoting better life-work balance for all, women and men, thus enabling retention of women in the profession and allowing career development.

Social partners
representatives of employers:



Social partners
representatives of employees:



1 <https://www.ilo.org/resource/record-decisions/conclusions-and-recommendations-promotion-decent-work-shape-green>

2 <https://wayback.archive-it.org/12710/20240718201828/https://belgian-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/media/bj0adazv/declaration-finale.pdf>

3 Examples include:

- the Diversity and Inclusion ecosystem at KLM Royal Dutch Airlines;
- Air France having a workforce made up of 45.5% women;
- signing of the Charter “Feminising airline and aerospace professions” on 8 March 2022 by 12 companies and institutions in the sector, including Air France, Airbus, Transavia etc, and the follow-up events on reaching out to girls and students;

4 ICAO, Global Aviation Gender Summit, 9 Aug. 2018, Session 4: Cultural stereotypes;

Women and aviation: Quality jobs, attraction and retention, David Seligson. International Labour Organization, Sectoral Policies Department, Geneva, 2019.

5 These figures are based on a survey CANSO launched to its members by late 2022. The average numbers correspond to the responses received from 25 ANSPs.

6 An example can be Women in Flight scholarship program, established by easyJet: <https://mediacentre.easyjet.com/story/15530/inspiring-women-to-fly-cae-launches-2022-women-in-flight-program-with-easyjet>

7 Turkish Airlines has extended the legal maternity leave from 16 weeks to 20 weeks to allow the expectant mothers to spend more time with their babies. The airline also offers the opportunity to work part-time until the children reach primary school age.