

Chairwoman of the EU Transport Council  
Ms S.A.M. Dijkma  
Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment  
Plesmanweg 1-6  
2597 JG The Hague  
The Netherlands



RE: EU-Gulf Air Transport Agreements – TTE Council meeting, 6-7 June 2016

Her Excellency Ms Dijkma

The undersigned supporters of Europeans for Fair Competition (E4FC), a coalition of concerned European citizens and organizations, would like to draw the special attention of the European Transport Council to the issue of “fair competition” between European airlines and a number of their competitors based in the Gulf.

Indisputable documented evidence shows that the nations of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have injected over €39 billion (between 2004-2014 alone) in government subsidies and unfair benefits into their state-owned airlines [see <http://e4fc.eu/subsidies>]. These nations and their subsidized airlines have used these funds to develop services and massive capacity between Europe and Asia via their hubs and are proceeding with a number of strategic investments in European airlines to feed their own operations and gain market access.

In turn, European airlines are not only losing market share, they are losing entire markets, with an inevitable negative impact on the European economy. It is crucial to have an EU-based airline industry that best serves Europe’s strategic interest, i.e., consumers, European employment, investment, competitiveness and connectivity. Flights to and from the EU, performed by an EU-based airline, will result in at least four times more local employment than the same flight performed by a non-EU airline.

It is vital that the EU pursue a comprehensive policy that strengthens the accessibility of European hubs to safeguard connectivity and consumer choice long term. We welcome the statement by Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015, announcing the Commission’s new Aviation Strategy and insisting on the importance of both open market access and fair competition.

We believe fair competition would be best addressed through the inclusion of provisions effectively securing undistorted competition in bilateral air services agreements between the European Union, its Member States and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations. We also believe that measures against unfair practices from third countries and third country operators should be adopted by European institutions. Specific to the United Arab Emirates and the State of Qatar, immediate action is necessary to ensure a competitive and level playing field for European commercial aviation.

E4FC stands for:

- (1) promoting, restoring and protecting a level playing field for European aviation
- (2) promoting fair and balanced air service agreements and requiring oversight and enforcement of compliance with those agreements
- (3) protecting European aviation workers from the threat of job loss due to unprecedented state-subsidized airline expansion, and
- (4) providing solutions regarding how air service/open skies agreements should address a disproportional flow of state-subsidized carrier capacity to and from Europe, including the development of a proper trade defense instrument for European aviation.

We, therefore, call on the EU Transport Council to include a strong and comprehensive fair competition clause, as well as oversight and enforcement procedures in any future air services agreement to be concluded between the EU and GCC. In the meantime, we continue our campaign to enforce international aviation and trade rules, ensure fair and equitable competition and a level playing field.

Aviation is viciously competitive. We can compete with any airline, but not with governments.

Thank you for your courteous attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,



Steven Verhagen, President, VNV (On behalf of E4FC Supporters)

[s.verhagen@vnv.nl](mailto:s.verhagen@vnv.nl)

Dellaertlaan 61

1171 KZ Badhoevedorp

E4FC Supporters:

 AIRFRANCE

 KLM

 Lufthansa Group

 SWISS

 Austrian

 brussels airlines

 HOP!

 transavia

 Air Dolomiti

 Eurowings

 Martinair



Erick Derivry, President

Syndicat National des Pilotes de Ligne



Steven Verhagen, President

Vereniging Nederlandse Verkeersvliegers



Annette Groeneveld, President

Vereniging Nederlands Cabinepersoneel



Dirk Polloczek, President

European Cockpit Association



Evan Cullen, President

Irish Airline Pilots' Association



Darrell Myers, President

Association Luxembourgeoise des Pilotes de Ligne



Luciana Passo, President

Sindicato Nacional Do Pessoal De Voo Da Aviação Civil



Flore Arrighi, President

UNAC



Ilja Schulz, President

Vereinigung Cockpit



Alain Thromas, President

Cfdt Air France



Martin Lindgren, President

Svensk Pilotförening



Timo Saajoranta, President

Finnish Pilots' Association



Nic van Holstein,  
President  
Vakcentrale voor  
Professionals



Ron Scherft, President  
Nederlandse Vereniging  
Van Luchtvaart Technici



Zakaria Boufangacha,  
President  
Federatie Nederlandse  
Vakbeweging



Bob Van der Wal, President  
Vereniging van Hoger KLM  
Personeel



Brendan O'Neal,  
President  
British Airline Pilots  
Association



Joop Hofland, President  
De Unie



Yngve Carlsen, President  
Norwegian Cockpit  
Association



Dolf Polders, President  
Christelijk Nationaal  
Vakverbond



Nicoley Baublies,  
President  
Industriegewerkschaft  
Luftverkehr



Alexander Behrens,  
President  
Unabhängige  
Flugbegleiter  
Organisation



Jo Bjorn Skatval, President  
Norsk Flygerforbund



Annette Groeneveld,  
President  
European Cabin Crew  
Association



Jesus Cuevas, President  
Sindicato de Tripulantes  
Auxiliares de Vuelo de  
Líneas Aéreas



Johannes Gudmundsson,  
President  
Félag Íslenskra  
Atvinnuflugmanna



Axel Tippmann, President  
Kapers



João Carlos Costa,  
President



Javier Gómez Barrero, President

Sindicato Español de Pilotos de  
Líneas Aéreas



David Lanfranchi, Chair

Syndicat National du Personnel  
Navigant Commerical

cc: Ms. Violeta Bulc, EU Transport Commissioner  
Mr. Henrik Hololei, Director General, DG Mobility and Transport  
Mr. Michael Cramer, Chair of the EP Transport & Tourism Committee  
Ms. Isabella De Monte, Member of the European Parliament  
Mr. Wim Van de Camp, Member of the European Parliament  
Ms. Jackie Foster, Member of the European Parliament  
Mr. Davor Skrlec, Member of the European Parliament  
Ms. Marie-Christine Arnautu, Member of the European Parliament