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Vereinte  
Dienstleistungs-  
gewerkschaft

ver.di - 10112 Berlin

Mr. Jaques Barrot  
European Commission  
Vice-President  
Directorate-General for Energy and Transport  
B - 1059 Brussels

Bundsvorstand

Paula-Thiede-Ufer 10  
10179 Berlin

Telefon: 030 6956-0  
Telefax: 030 6956-3003

Datum 31.03.06

Ihre Zeichen

Unsere Zeichen ad

Tel.-Durchwahl -2641

Fax-Durchwahl -3840

Dear Mr. Barrot,

As the trade unions representing the aviation industry in France, Austria and Germany, and the Works Councils of the airport operators we are extremely concerned. We regard the draft proposal for an amendment of Directive 96/67/EC dated October 15, 1996 as a serious attack on the living and working conditions of aviation employees. .

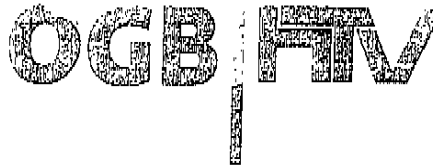
If this draft is proposed by the Commission, the Council and the Parliament and passed by the European committees, then many workers could lose their jobs and others could suffer a deterioration in pay and working conditions.

This draft prepares the way for a further deregulation of the market for ground-handling services. However, it contains absolutely no concrete regulations which would prevent social consequences. Instead of the present contents of the draft, the revision of the groundhandling directive should meet the following requirements:

1. A deterioration in working conditions must be avoided. Binding regulations must therefore ensure that when groundhandling services are transferred from one company to another all employees affected are to be taken over by the new groundhandling service. The employees taken over (in this way) must be provided with working conditions at least on the same level as those of their previous company.

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www.verdi.de  
E-Mail:  
arnotte.dedekind@verdi.de



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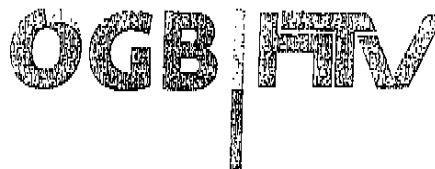
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2. Wage dumping is to be prevented.  
Companies providing groundhandling services must therefore be obliged to apply the local, regional or national representative collective agreement.
3. No obstacles should be put in the way of the further development of high quality groundhandling services.  
Allowing airlines and airport operators to provide directly groundhandling services themselves has produced an excellent standard of service, linked with and made possible by positive job prospects for employees. There must be no introduction of compulsory separation of groundhandling services from airport operators or airlines. Competition to provide the highest-quality service is positive, but this would be prevented by the separation of company sectors currently under consideration by the Commission. The result would simply be competition for the cheapest and thus the poorest working conditions.
4. In the interests of high quality groundhandling services companies should put their skills and their reputation into obtaining service contracts.  
Sub-contracting, on the other hand, produces a lack of transparency and leads to a drop in the quality of service. This is why the planned introduction of sub-contracting must not take place.

The harmonization of living and working conditions and thus of conditions for competition is far from being completed since the latest EU expansion. Additional, compulsory market liberalization at this point in time would mean provoking a further distortion of competition to the disadvantage of proven companies and their employees.

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Dear Mr. Barrot, the draft revision of the Groundhandling Directive has created an anti-European reaction among employees at the airports of France, Austria and Germany. At company meetings, through their participation in special activities and through collections of signatures, thousands of airport employees in our countries have already expressed their strong opposition simply on the basis of the draft of an official proposal. Their opposition will increase if the Commission uses this draft as the basis for an official proposal. We would like to work together with you to ensure that our colleagues see the European Union in a positive light, and not simply as an organization which threatens their existence. We ask you therefore not to pursue the draft any further.

With kind regards

Jan Kahmann  
Member of the National Executive  
Board of the United Services Union

Willibald Steinkellner  
Chairman Austrian Trade Union  
Federation HTV

Serge Gentili  
Civil aviation secretary FO

Gerhard Gager,  
Chairmans of the staff representative Vienna Airport

Manfred Biegler

Rudolf Wagner  
Fachsekretär Bundes-  
sektion Verkehr HTV

Christelle Martin  
works council Paris Airport Authority

Ralf Krüger  
Chairman of the works  
council Munich Airport

Rudolf Dollack  
Coordinator of the works  
councils for international  
airports in Germany

Edgar Stejskal,  
Chairman of the works  
Council Fraport

v.verdi.de  
E-Mail:  
annette.dedekind@verdi.de