



Brussels, 23 February 2006

**TO:**

**The European Commission,  
The Director General Eurocontrol  
The Directors General of Civil Aviation of ECAA and adjacent nations.**

Today the European Commission informed the Social Partners of the European Union ATM Social Dialogue on the South East European FABA initiative.

In view of this report, Social Partners wish to reiterate the main elements of the Palermo Agreement. The Palermo Agreement between ATM Social Partners is considered the pathfinder for the implementation of changes in European ATM.

The main elements of the Palermo Agreement are;

- Safety is paramount
- Human Resource management is a key to the successful development of FABs.
- FABs should be based on operational requirements and not national boundaries.
- The people best qualified to ensure that ATM capacity is increased whilst maintaining safety are the ANSPs with their highly qualified staff.
- Single European Sky Regulations commit Member States and the European Commission to the Bottom-Up Approach to FAB development.
- Member States have a responsibility to work with ANSPs and their staff in the development of FABs.

Social Partners recognise the ultimate authority of the National Authorities, but wish to remind all parties that the SES Regulations enshrine the Bottom-Up Approach as a cornerstone to FAB development. For successful FAB development it is vital that Social Partners are fully engaged in the process from the very beginning.

Social Partners do not normally comment on individual FAB initiatives. However they note that to date, the South East European FABA project has largely seen a top-down approach. Social Partners wish to remind all parties of the 13 year experience with the Top-Down Approach to airspace redesign in the CEATS project. Social Partners underline the significance of the existing multinational BUL-ROM FAB initiative, which is in full compliance with SES Regulations.

To be successful, the Definition Phase of FABA must demonstrate a shift to a truly bottom-up approach, with full provision for ANSP and personnel involvement. Social Partners are ready to provide support.

**ETF / Joint ATM Working Group**

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