

Air transport: Community air traffic controller licence, Single European Sky package

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The committee adopted the report by Ingo SCHMITT (EPP-ED , DE) broadly approving the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure, subject to a number of amendments:

- the training of air traffic controllers should place more emphasis on safety, security and crisis management techniques, as controllers may be confronted with emergencies such as plane hijackings and bomb threats;
- in order to safeguard the free movement of air traffic controllers, Member States should have the right to develop national endorsements only in exceptional cases. Moreover, such endorsements must be non-discriminatory and based on objective criteria;
- language training should be specifically mentioned as an element of air traffic control training;
- language proficiency requirements should be made tighter in certain circumstances, at the discretion of the Member States: in addition to proficiency in English at level 4 of the ICAO proficiency test, Member States should be able to require air traffic controllers to have a knowledge of English and/or the local language at proficiency level 5 "for imperative reasons of safety" in certain specific circumstances which must be fully justified (the Commission proposal had provided for Member States to be able to impose local language requirements in some cases but only at proficiency level 4). MEPs argued that level 5 proficiency was necessary to deal with emergencies (e.g. in order to communicate with airport firefighters and other local emergency service personnel) and other special situations, particularly at large airports;
- to avoid 'social dumping', a new clause should be added specifying that it is the employment law of the host country where the applicant actually exercises his/her activities that applies;
- lastly, certain terms and definitions should be added (i.e. 'medicines', 'psychoactive substances', etc.) to make the directive compatible with Eurocontrol's standard requirements for ATM services personnel.