

Press Release

Decoration of easyJet CEO with the French Légion d'Honneur raises questions from SNPL pilots

Roissy CDG, October 20, 2016 - SNPL easyJet Board cautiously welcome the recent French Légion d'Honneur award to Mrs Carolyn McCall, easyJet CEO, "in recognition of her efforts and those of her team which have resulted in economic and industrial benefits for France". This honour delivered with great discretion by the French Ambassador to the United Kingdom sounds similar to the distinction received by Qatar Airways CEO about one year ago.

No doubt that the award of this high French distinction will contribute to reinforce links between easyJet and its employees based in France and it would be unfair not to congratulate Mrs McCall on this occasion. However, knowing that easyJet "operates one of the world's largest Airbus fleets," should we see in this event a reward for the purchase of 135 A320 in 2014?

The same circumspection applies if we consider the expansion of easyJet's activities in France. Although we cannot deny easyJet has a positive impact in France in terms of activities and consumer's choice (lower prices for passengers, more flights from French airports, creation of permanent jobs, etc.) it seems there is a gap between this idyllic picture and everyday working life as experienced by easyJet employees.

For SNPL pilots, this award must not obscure the difficulties of social dialogue within easyJet. The arduous schedules, the use of the maximum legal limits as a daily goal, the level of exhaustion of a majority of pilots not taken into account, have gradually led pilots to unsustainable work rhythms, under increasing pressure and stress.

This deterioration in working conditions is felt all across Europe such as to motivate several recent strikes in various European easyJet's bases. Combining this in France with the misuse of posted workers, an undersized Human Resources Department and downwards financial forecasts, employee's uneasiness contrasts with the joyful image displayed during Mrs McCall's decoration ceremony.

Beyond legitimate questions about the real motives of the French Government hidden behind this honour, SNPL easyJet wishes to point out the number of social outstanding issues within the company which have not received an appropriate solution from Mrs McCall yet.

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