Dear colleagues,

On 13 November, 14 months of negotiating about the revision of the AIIC-EU Convention came to an end. The result is widely met with praise for our negotiating team who managed to fend off the outrageous initial demands put forward by the Institutions and settle for an overall acceptable compromise package. Some colleagues, among them Phil Smith who initiated a chain letter campaign, are unhappy with the outcome and call for rejecting it at the sector meeting which will be called to ratify the agreement reached at the negotiating table.

Evidently, everybody is entitled to his or her own opinion. But before deciding one way or the other, one should get one's facts right:

The revision of parts of the AIIC-EU Convention was demanded by the EU Institutions, not by AIIC. The sector made it clear that it was content with present pay and working conditions, and it gave its elected negotiators the mandate not to accept wage cuts or additional categories over and above the existing two category system. **This mandate was fulfilled.**

Obviously, one cannot expect to enter negotiations with a shopping list of demands and come out with all items neatly packed in the shopping basket. Indeed, the EU Institutions learnt that the hard way: the only things they got out of a very charged list are

- the partial (!) flexibility of our travel conditions, with a series of exceptions and protective clauses, in line with conditions applied to our staff colleagues and with the general practice in today's flight industry, for private and professional travel;
- 250 days for the beginners' category instead of 100.

In return, not only our fees and two category system remained untouched, but (contrary to what Phil Smith claims) our negotiators got better conditions in several areas, not least for work on missions, training, time off rules, etc.

I do not pretend the result of the negotiations is ideal, but it is a more than decent package, and it is what the colleagues we unanimously elected to negotiate on our behalf tell us they could get. I trust these colleagues. I have seen them at work for many years. The key members of the delegation are the ones who defied the Tanzilli administration and led us in our successful battle to keep the AIIC-EU Convention when it was supposed to be replaced by a recruiting scheme making use of a commercial agency. They are the ones who led us in our successful battle to get the community tax back, and with a solid legal base. If these colleagues who have proven their trustworthiness, their competence, their dedication to our common cause, who have respected the terms of the mandate we
gave them, tell me now, after 14 months of hard work, that this is how far they could go, I trust them once again.

Think about it, and about something else: Phil Smith says that "the threat of the institutions walking away from the agreement has been dangled in front of us". Here are the facts:

**If the sector says "No deal",** the Convention will be denounced by the Institutions. Both parties will have 12 months to negotiate a new one - or not. In any case, the **entire** text will then be off the table. Negotiations will have to start from scratch, and not in a better climate than what we have just witnessed. The present negotiating team will obviously not step into the ring again. Who would? And who could get a better deal?

Think about it. And come to the meetings organised by the delegation this week Tuesday in Brussels, and in January in Strasbourg (one has already been held in Luxembourg). Ask our negotiators your questions, tell them your concerns. Make up your mind upon serious reflection. I trust you'll come to the same conclusion that I have come to: Let's call it a deal!

Silke Gebhard  
*DE booth, Ex-negotiator in the EU sector, Coordinator of AIIC's Standing Committee for the Agreement Sectors*

---

**Recommended citation format:**