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Zagreb  
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Dear Colleagues, Dear friends,

We would like to express support of Croatian pilots for the actions you are undertaking to defend the dignity of pilot profession.

Airline managers, as well as the flying public, often forget the primary role of pilots – to ensure safety. For that reason, pilots' demands are often seen as simply demands for more pay and/or less work. This is a very false assumption. Provisions of our CLAs have been carved for many years in order to achieve a proper balance of work and life and to address all those specific personal challenges of pilot profession. Therefore, the aim of pilots' CLAs is to ensure the optimal long-term pilot performance and ultimately – passenger safety.

Struggle for the better conditions of pilot work is ultimately a struggle for better passenger safety.

Croatian pilots are impressed by the unity and determination of their German colleagues. With more than 90% of pilots voting for the industrial action, you showed you really mean what managers only declare - there is no compromise with safety!

Unfortunately, the position of management and parts of the media seems all too familiar to us. The management is focused on short-term one-time financial gains – their management bonuses depend on this. When the strike supersedes a futile negotiation they suddenly want to “stop this madness and talk”. Pilots on strike are being blamed for passenger inconveniences. This is where good communication with the media is crucial. The message is clear: pilots would rather be flying and we are not simply fighting for more money; we fight for a proper balance of work and private life to ensure optimum long-term pilot performance.

With less than a year passing since our 8-day strike, we are very aware of the stress you are going through. Every pilot participating in the strike is exposed to criticism from unsupportive members of the media and the public. The stress is especially strong for the representatives. We admire the way Lufthansa pilots are showing their solidarity. Also impressive is the way your representatives communicate with the media, demonstrating determination and professionalism. You make us proud to be pilots!

Being a small and relatively inexperienced pilot association, Croatian ALPA has a lot to learn on internal organisation. We note many of your top representatives were able to participate in the IFALPA conference only a few days before the strike. Being involved in preparation of two strikes and two walkouts in the last three years, we are well aware what a huge project this is. This demonstrates how well organised you are. We are learning from your example.

Croatian pilots are proud to stand by your side. Only if pilots speak with one united voice their concerns will be addressed.

Yours sincerely,

Capt. Zoran Bilić  
CROALPA President