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IFALPA calls for the unique contribution of Italian pilots to the industry's growth to be recognised

CHERTSEY 12 September: The International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) calls for an end to the continuing use of Alitalia as a 'political football'.

In recent months the Italian media and public have been led to believe that all of the woes of the ailing airline are due to the terms and conditions of employment of Alitalia's pilots and other employee groups. No mention is made of decades of management failure masked until the mid-1990s by government bail out and subsidy.

In the latest assault, the professional status of pilots is under attack. A number of groups are working to create a single contract for all workers employed by Alitalia, be they pilots, cabin crew or ground staff. The reason for this 'one size fits all' policy it is said is so that industrial relations can be simplified.

However, such a simplistic approach, and one unique in a highly complex and safety critical industry, is unlikely to be effective since it fails to recognise that pilots as a group bear most of the responsibility for safety of flight and work, together with their cabin crew colleagues, in a dynamic and challenging flight environment. Operational decisions, made in this challenging environment, are the exclusive domain of pilots. As such, pilots need and deserve a contract that addresses their unique professional status and duties.

To erode the status of pilots as a profession will, without any doubt impede industrial negotiations for all employee groups. Accordingly, IFALPA joins with its Italian Member Association ANPAC in calling on the institutions, industries and trade unions involved in the initiative to reconsider their actions and consider the vital role that pilots play in the development of Alitalia's future, the safety of its passengers and its employees.

Notes to Editors

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 100 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. See the Federation website www.ifalpa.org

For more information contact Gideon Ewers, IFALPA Media Communications Officer +44 1932 579041 or on gideonewers@ifalpa.org