

AirNav - hitch over rosters delays vote on proposed 5-year deal

Brian Sheehan

A ballot on the proposed 5-year agreement between AirNav and Fórsa has been delayed, IRN understands, due to a hitch over the issue of rosters for air traffic controllers (ATCs).

In Late July, IRN reported that a new Comprehensive Labour Agreement (CLA) was aiming to secure pay and IR stability at the semi-state company, which is of critical importance to the Irish economy.

The draft agreement was described as a “comprehensive settlement” spanning from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2029, covering areas like basic pay – rises of 16% plus sectoral bargaining (1%) – rosters, salary scales, pensionable pay and importantly, recruitment.

While a ballot of union members was expected to have started by now, IRN understands this has been delayed due to dissatisfaction over rostering, an issue that has on occasion been a source of tension on occasion between ATCs and management.

The draft CLA is the product of engagement between AirNav and Fórsa, with the assistance of Sean McHugh, in his role as an independent mediator. It is to be the latest of a series of such agreements at the semi-state, which was formerly part of the Irish Aviation Authority.

The internal disputes mechanism at AirNav – the Internal Disputes Resolution Board (IDRB) – which has been in place for several years, was not involved in the process of reaching agreement on the draft CLA. It has a separate role, one of independent internal dispute resolution, assisting in maintaining a “well managed, stable industrial relations environment which ensures industrial peace and service continuity”.

The proposed CLA says the parties accept “the requirement for continued flexibility in rostering, assigning additional tasks, the realisation of efficiencies to maximise manpower capability, the need for ongoing cooperation with new technological initiatives, including automation and changes in work demands arising from regulatory requirements”.

In the meantime, staff are expected to continue to adhere to terms and conditions of employment of both the 2015-2019 and 2020-2024 agreements.

However, the parties to the proposed new CLA will be hoping to resolve their differences in advance of the expiry of the existing agreement at the end of this year. (See also, [*‘AirNav – ‘service continuity’ at heart of proposed 5-year agreement’ in News Feature, IRN 29 - 25/07/2024*](#))