



PRESS RELEASE

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A Big Step for Aviation Safety – In the Wrong Direction – EU Agency Publishes Inadequate Pilot Fatigue Rules –

Today, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) published its proposal for EU rules to protect against the safety-risks associated with air crew fatigue, caused by long duty hours and short rest periods. Disregarding scientific evidence and designed to avoid costs to the airlines, these rules are well below the standards to be expected from a credible safety regulator. If not changed significantly, they will reduce safety standards currently in place in many EU countries – to the detriment of Europe's travelling public.

"After one year of work on the next generation of EU "Flight Time Limitation" (FTL) rules, the text proposed by EASA is more than disappointing" says ECA President, Captain Martin Chalk. "The Agency had a unique opportunity to present a solid, science-based and safety-oriented FTL law – one that is comparable to what the US Federal Aviation Administration proposes and to the United Kingdom's well developed and industry supported FTL rules. Yet, this opportunity has been missed, which puts the EU at the bottom end of international safety regulators."

Whereas EASA's mission is to "promote the highest common standards of safety [...] in Europe and worldwide" its FTL proposal moves in the opposite direction. Two examples:

	EASA Proposal	US FAA Proposal	Scientific Studies
Day Duties	max 14 hrs / day	max 13 hrs / day	max 12 hrs / day
Night Duties <i>(e.g. starting at 00:00)</i>	max 12 hrs - for 7 days in a row -	max 9 hrs - max 3 consecutive nights -	max 10 hrs - number of consecutive night duties to be limited -

Note: EU limits for Truck Drivers: 9 hrs driving time per day / 10 hrs working time at night.

"Flight Time Limitations are about the human body clock and physical limits. But EASA seems to suggest Europe's pilots are more fatigue-resistant and can fly longer hours than their American counterparts and more than scientific studies say is safe" says Philip von Schöppenthau, ECA Secretary General. "EASA's rules disregard decades of scientific research. Why? Because of years of aggressive airline lobbying against any new rules that might increase their costs. I am not sure their passengers will appreciate that."

Comparing EASA's rules to the ones of the UK shows the extent of safety-regression that will happen: in future, an airline could let their pilots start at 05:30 in the morning, carry out 4 take-offs and 4 landings and end their duty at 18:15, i.e. after 12.45 hours. The UK rules, which govern 20% of the EU's aviation market, allow for no more than 9 hours.

ECA, representing European 38.600 pilots, strongly rejects these rules and calls on the EU Institutions to promote science-based safety rules to protect Europe's travelling public.

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