



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 12 February 2011

Does Europe Need Dead Bodies to Act on Pilot Fatigue? – Science-based EU Rules Needed to Combat Fatigue –

Today's 2nd anniversary of the US Colgan Air accident, in which 50 people died near Buffalo, USA, is a tragic reminder that air crew fatigue can kill. Following this accident, the US Federal Aviation Authority acted decisively and issued, in Sept. 2010, its proposal for revised air crew fatigue rules – aimed at improving flight safety and based on scientific evidence and world-wide best practice.

In stark contrast, the EU recently proposed new fatigue rules which are based on a flawed Impact Assessment, disregard decades of scientific evidence (incl. the EU's own scientific study) and set EU safety standards that will be well below those proposed by the US. Also, these rules will reduce safety levels in many EU countries that currently maintain better limits on pilots' flying hours.

"Long duty hours and short rest periods for pilots can be a deadly cocktail, if not properly regulated and backed up by science" says ECA President, Captain Martin Chalk. "The 50 people who lost their lives 2 years ago are 50 too many. Here in Europe, this message does not seem to have arrived yet. Otherwise, EASA – the European Aviation Safety Agency – would not have proposed such an inadequate set of fatigue rules." He adds: "With pilot fatigue contributing to 15-20% of all fatal air accidents related to human error, it is imperative that EASA makes substantial changes to its proposed rule. If not, it will be the passengers on European planes who will pay the price."

"EASA's flawed fatigue rules are the result of concerted airline lobbying against stricter regulations that might increase their commercial operating costs" says ECA Secretary General, Philip von Schöppenthau. "Some of the biggest brand names of European aviation are involved in this campaign against science-based fatigue rules." He adds: "We demand that EASA ignores their commercial agenda, as well as any 'social agenda' they wrongly allege we follow; and instead let science speak!"

ECA, representing 38.600 pilots from 38 European countries, calls on the EU Institutions to bring EASA's rules in line with well-established scientific evidence and to deliver safety rules that are adequate to protect Europe's travelling public, as well as those who live under the flight paths.

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And visit:

Web-section on Pilot Fatigue:

<http://www.eurocockpit.be/pages/flight-time-limitations>

Press Release on EASA's Fatigue Rules, 20/12/2010:

<http://www.eurocockpit.be/stories/20101220/a-big-step-for-aviation-safety-in-the-wrong-direction-eu-agency-publishes-inadequat>