



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 22 Dec. 2011

New US Pilot Fatigue Rules Published

– Despite Intense Industry Opposition –

Yesterday, the US Federal Aviation Administration announced the publication of new safety rules, aimed at ensuring that pilot fatigue – due to long duty hours, insufficient rest/sleep opportunities, etc. – does not endanger flight operations. These rules come almost 3 years after 50 people died in the US Colgan Air accident in which pilot fatigue played a crucial role.

The new rules were preceded by a fierce battle with the airline industry. US operators strongly lobbied against stricter rules, claiming they would allegedly cost them billions of dollars. As a result, all-cargo operators are excluded from the new rules. However, the US political establishment backed the FAA in its defence of a comprehensive set of science-based rules, which will now apply to the large majority of operations.

"We will use the coming days to analyse in detail the new US rules, which at first glance – and despite some changes – seem to have kept the overall balance of the FAA's initial proposal of Sept. 2010" says ECA President, Nico Voorbach. "The good news today is that the USA have taken a decisive step to replace their outdated regulations with a modern set of rules. These new rules bring the US much closer to what a wide body of scientific medical research recommends to be safe."

"Here in Europe, the EU Regulators have not taken the same approach so far" he stresses. "When EASA issued its proposal for EU fatigue rules, one year ago, it disregarded decades of scientific evidence and produced a rule-set that would lower safety standards in many EU countries. We can only hope the revised EASA proposal – which we expect for early next year – will put safety and science first."

"As in the US, Europe's airlines are using an exaggerated cost argument to lobby against science-based rules" explains ECA Secretary General Philip von Schöppenthau. "The US example shows how powerful certain segments of the industry are. But it also shows that political leadership can put limits to vested interests. On our side of the Atlantic, it is time for EU decision-makers to show such leadership and to defend the most fundamental passenger right: the *right to a safe flight*."

* * *

For further information, please contact:

Nico Voorbach, ECA President, Tel: +32-491-37.89.82

Philip von Schöppenthau, ECA Secretary General, Tel: +32-2-705.32.93

And visit:

Web-section on Pilot Fatigue:

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

Dead-Tired.eu:

<http://www.dead-tired.eu/>