



ECA
Piloting Safety



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PRESS RELEASE

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Transport Ministers Discuss Air Passenger Safety

At today's EU Transport Council, the Danish EU Presidency will launch a Ministerial debate on the safety risks associated with pilot fatigue and the need for adequate EU regulations to prevent accidents. Based on the Presidency's [programme](#) – which states that “flight time regulations for pilots and cabin crew must be based on scientific evidence”, the Danish Transport Minister [stated](#) that “Fatigue among pilots is a very serious matter and over the coming years, the increasing number of passengers and flights will pose challenges in relation to the pilots’ flight time regulations.” ECA welcomes this commitment and calls upon Ministers to place the safety of Europe’s air passengers at the core of future EU rules on pilot fatigue.

This Ministerial debate comes just 3 days after the close of a stakeholder consultation on a revised proposal for future EU pilot fatigue rules, issued by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) on 18 Jan. 2012.

“Ministers and politicians cannot afford to ignore the real safety threat posed by fatigued pilots” says Nico Voorbach, ECA President and a pilot himself. “It is the Ministers who will have to sign the new EU rules, and it is they who will have to take the political responsibility if things go wrong and an accident happens where fatigue played a role. We therefore strongly welcome the EU Presidency’s initiative. We urge the Ministers present today to request that EASA’s final proposal is firmly based on medical and scientific evidence, and puts passenger safety ahead of the airlines’ commercial interests.”

“EASA’s new text includes some urgently needed improvements, compared to its initial proposal of Dec. 2010, says Philip von Schöppenthau, ECA Secretary General. However, it still disregards many findings of three scientists commissioned by EASA itself. The scientists recommend e.g. to limit flying at night to 10 hours, but EASA insists on 11 hours. Equally, if EASA’s rules are not amended, a pilot could be asked to land the plane after being awake for 20-21 hrs. I am not sure this is what passengers expect from the EU and from their Transport Ministers.”

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And visit

www.dead-tired.eu + video “[Option Not Available](#)”

Note to editors: ECA is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 38.000 pilots from across Europe. Website: www.eurocockpit.be