



On Thursday, March 24th, 2011, the SkyTeam Pilots Association (SPA) concluded its semi-annual meeting in Seoul, South Korea. The pilots of the SPA continue their unprecedented cooperation, mutual support and information sharing at their member airlines in areas concerning safety, security, industrial matters, industry consolidation and other related issues of concern in today's fast paced global aviation environment.

The SPA continued its dialogue on the future of the SkyTeam Alliance. The SPA recommitted to enhancing the relationships between pilot groups whose networks are connected, both inside and outside of international alliances. To this end, the SPA Executive Board approved a resolution addressing the possible SPA membership of pilot groups not represented by unions at a SkyTeam Alliance airline. This will allow pilots from China Eastern, China Southern, Vietnam Airlines and others to establish a dialogue with the SPA and its member unions.

The SPA discussed the issue of Korean Air Lines' (KAL) use of temporary dispatched pilots (TDP) in direct violation of South Korean law. This practice of hiring expatriate pilots undermines the career prospects of KAL pilots as well as limits both KAL and TDP pilots' collective bargaining rights. Most egregiously, TDP pilots are allowed to perform flight duty periods for 20 consecutive days.

Additionally, the practice of extending maximum flight duty periods well beyond the legal limit as requested by Alitalia management and approved by the Italian regulator is a cause for grave concern. Scheduling and approving flight duty periods well in excess of 24 hours is unacceptable.

The SPA condemns these practices as unsafe for any airline to schedule or for any professional pilot to accept. SPA Chairman Jennifer Jones-Giezendanner stated, "Our most important goal is to achieve the highest level of safety across all SkyTeam airline brands. Both Alitalia and KAL must do all they can to ensure their pilots are well rested and prepared for their flight duties. Clearly, that is not the case here."

The SPA also discussed the progress regarding proposed rulemaking on Flight Time Limitations (FTL) both in the USA and Europe, and is very concerned about the FTL developments in Europe. Rather than establishing a FTL law based on current scientific evidence on fatigue, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) seems to have yielded to strong pressure from the airline lobby. Airline economic interests cannot be allowed to have a higher priority than passenger safety, and the current EASA proposals must be amended to ensure the highest possible level of aviation safety. The SPA fully supports the European pilots in their ongoing efforts to convince the EASA to regain its focus on safety.

The pilot representatives of the SPA continue to work on behalf of the pilot groups we represent. In today's global economic environment, cooperation between the member organizations of the SPA is paramount to protecting the interests of all SkyTeam pilots.

The SkyTeam Pilots Association will next meet in the fall of 2011 in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

The SkyTeam Pilots Association consists of representatives of pilots from nine member airlines around the world who maintain international codeshare agreements with each other. The SPA represents over 25000 professional pilots. Members include pilots from AeroMexico, Aeroflot, Air France, Alitalia, CSA Czech Airlines, KLM, Korean Air, Alaska and Delta. Together, SPA member pilots safely fly almost 384 million passengers per year (one of every four airline passengers in the world) to nearly 856 destinations in 169 countries.