

Editorial



Cpt. M. Chalk
ECA President

What are the costs of an aircraft accident?
How do we measure the value of hundreds of people's lives? Can we ever calculate the millions of Euros worth of damage?

How should we calculate that cost and set it against the inevitable commercial cost of the investments necessary to avoid the tragedy in the first place?

These are the tough questions that will face the European Commission, Parliament and Council of Ministers in 2011 as they consider new sets of rules devised by the European Aviation Safety Agency in such diverse areas as aircraft and pilot licensing, National Aviation Safety Authority requirements, pilot fatigue protection rules and operational regulations. The difficult question is whether a regulation that compromises safety will ever result in a better commercial outcome for airlines? Or does competition in the area of safety make irrelevant the question of which airline provides the best service and most competitive price?

ECA represents the pilots who are charged with delivering every safe flight, and we believe passengers don't want to have to consider which airline is more or less likely to safely carry them to their destination. We believe it is the regulators' job to remove these sorts of considerations from the list of concerns, allowing passengers to focus on the schedule and the level of service that competing airlines deliver.

Europe used to compete with North America to be the safest air transport region in the world – now we are third, behind Asia. As EASA develops as the continent's safety regulator, we all need to urge it to put all other commercial, social and political considerations to one side and focus on their sole task of providing the highest, uniform, and scientifically justifiable safety regulation. If it achieves that goal, ECA will be its strongest supporter. But if EASA fails, and allows ill-informed political pressure or mis-

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Pilot Fatigue – 2011, a Crucial Year for Flight Safety

With EASA expected to issue its proposal for Europe's future Flight Time Limitations (FTL) regulations just before Christmas – pilot fatigue and its risks to flight safety will become the focus of 2011. This at least for Europe's pilots who convened at ECA's General Assembly to discuss FTL and the EU's approach to aviation safety. Reconfirming their previous commitment to science-based, safety-oriented FTL rules at the highest level, the Assembly's 70 participants unanimously adopted a Motion calling on the EU Institutions and Member States to focus on safety rather than listening to the airlines' demands for commercially-driven EASA FTL rules.

The Motion, which commits ECA's Member Associations from 38 European countries, representing over 38.600 pilots, demonstrates pilots' concern for aviation safety in Europe. It calls on the European Commission, Parliament and EU Member States to:

- deliver highest, scientifically supported FTL safety standards in Europe, in line with ICAO requirements, and free from social and commercial considerations;
- focus on safety, prevent safety-regression in national FTL rules, and to resist the airlines' lobbying in favour of commercially-driven EASA FTL rules;
- acknowledge that safety does not come for free, and that Europe's passengers must not have to wait for a major accident before pilot fatigue is taken seriously.

The Motion also requests the European Commission to swiftly issue clear guidance on how to interpret and implement the EU's current FTL Rules ('Subpart Q'), and to prevent ongoing abuses. So far, ECA's attempts to obtain such guidance and to trigger a thorough follow-up of current misinterpretations and abuses of Subpart Q have been without success. The Commission cannot afford to avoid dealing with the application of today's rules until the new EASA FTL rules apply – which is still several years away.

The Assembly Delegates confirmed their full support for ECA's quest for safe, science-based FTL rules, in line with ICAO requirements. Such rules are in the best interest of Europe's travelling public – as opposed to rules designed to advance the airlines' commercial interests. ■

Improving Helicopter Safety – An Urgent Task

Last October, the European Helicopter Safety Team (EHST) published its final report, having analysed 311 European helicopter accidents from 2000-2005 and suggested a way forward to improve an overall unsatisfactory situation. ECA considers this report as a milestone for the development and implementation of concrete recommendations aimed at improving helicopter safety, an area where there is still a lot of room for improvement.

The EHST was launched in 2006, as the European branch of the International Helicopter Safety Team, and created two sub-teams: the European Helicopter Safety Analysis Team (EHSAT) and the European Helicopter Safety Implementation Team (EHSIT). Since 2006, the EHSAT regional teams, composed of representatives of all stakeholders, met regularly and followed a data-driven methodology to identify the main factors contributing to over 300 helicopter accidents in Europe.

The report organised the accident data into three categories of operations: Commercial Air Transport, Aerial Work and General Aviation. While human factors (pilot decision-making) and mission planning are common contributing factors in

the three sectors, some differences were noted, due to the specifics of each kind of operations. Indeed, mission risk (importance of the "environment" factor – terrain, obstacle) constitutes the major



guided commercial/social lobbies to affect their rule-making, then we will become the harshest critic.

ECA understands that all human activity carries a risk, and we are proud to be part of an industry that has reduced that risk to extremely low levels. Flying on a commercial airliner is one of the safest activities any citizen can undertake. Yet that is only because we have never been complacent. The regulator must continue to provide the highest, scientifically supported safety regulations and ensure comprehensive safety oversight and inspection. Only then will passengers be able to compare competitive offerings from competing airlines, comfortable in the knowledge that they are only choosing a level of service, not gambling with the level of safety. ■

factor in Aerial Work missions, while external environment awareness and inadequate pilot experience feature in third place of contributing factors for Commercial Air Transport and General Aviation operations respectively.

These findings are very important: only by identifying the contributing factors to accidents can successful counter measures and lasting possible solutions be developed. This is exactly what the EHSIT teams are focusing on now: based on the EHSAT work, they are working towards developing intervention recommendations. To achieve this, they have created three specialist teams working on:

- Standard operating procedures, safety culture and safety management systems (SMS);
- Training issues;
- Regulatory issues (including standards and guidelines) to identify po-

tential areas for future EU-wide rule-making.

A fourth team addresses communication, as the dissemination of the related information to all industry stakeholders is key in this process.

ECA has been involved in the work of the EHEST since the beginning and is represented in all the three EHSIT specialist teams. Helicopter safety remains an important issue of concern for ECA. Recommendations from such industry-wide initiatives are an efficient way to achieve consensus proposals based on stakeholders' technical knowledge and thereby improve helicopter safety in Europe. ■

- To see the full report, please go to: <http://easa.europa.eu/communications/docs/ehest/EHEST%20Brochure.pdf>
- You can also find a series of toolkits freely accessible on IHST website: <http://www.ihst.org>

ECA Aviation Safety Day

How the EU is changing YOUR profession!



Brussels,

23-24 February 2011

For more info: www.eurocockpit.be

Next Meetings

14-15 Dec.: ECA Executive Board Meeting, Brussels, BE

14-15 Dec.: EU-Israel Negotiations, Brussels, BE

11-13 Jan.: EASA ATM.001, Cologne

11 Jan.: ECA Training, Licensing & Operations Working Group, Brussels

24 Dec.—4 Jan.: **ECA Office closed**

12-13 Jan.: EASA Flight Recorder Partnership Group, Cologne, DE

13 Jan.: ECA Helicopter Working Group, Madrid, ES

18-19 Jan.: ECA Executive Board Meeting, Brussels, BE

20-21 Jan.: Eurocontrol Runway Excursions & Incursions Working Groups, Brussels, BE

25-27 Jan.: EASA ADR.002 & .003 meetings, Cologne, DE

25 Jan.: ECA Flight Data Working Group, Brussels, BE

26 Jan.: EU Aviation Safety Conference, Brussels, BE

26-27 Jan.: SAGAS, Brussels, BE

27 Jan.: ECA Flight Time Limitations Working Group, Brussels, BE

9 Feb.: EU-Canada Negotiations, Brussels, BE

10 Feb.: SESAR Joint Undertaking Quarterly meeting, Brussels, BE

The **European Cockpit Association** is the association of Flight Crew Unions from European States. Based in Brussels, ECA has 38 Member Associations, representing over **38.600** pilots from 38 countries. For more information: www.eurocockpit.be.

ECA 2010 General Assembly

On 23-24 November, ECA held its General Assembly, during which the ECA members acknowledged the need for a strong representation at EU level, ready to address the current and future regulatory challenges faced by the aviation industry. ECA was honoured to welcome two keynote speakers: **Margus Rahuoja** (member of EU Transport Commissioner Kallas' Cabinet) and **David McMillan** (Director General of Eurocontrol). The GA re-elected **Martin Chalk** as ECA President as well as two new Technical Directors: **Francis Nardy** and **Álvaro Gammicchia**.

With the election of a new Executive Board, the adoption of a new streamlined Constitution and the adoption of a solid budget for 2011, the ECA members acted to strengthen the association and provide the tools necessary to face future challenges and to represent pilots effectively at European level.

The Conference was also the occasion for ECA to voice its concerns to the European Commission and Eurocontrol. Conference delegates took note of the European Commission's will to focus on aviation safety, while emphasising that safety should not be compromised in the search for competitiveness. The importance of science-based, safety orientated Flight Time Limitation rules and the need for



Margus Rahuoja & ECA President, Martin Chalk

the Commission to take leadership were also made clear. ECA welcomed Eurocontrol's recognition of ECA as an important partner and reiterated the will to continue to be closely involved in their activities.

With a new Executive Board elected, the outgoing Board Directors Régis Fusenig, Riku Aakkula and Joe Kraus were thanked for their commitment to ECA and the new Directors were warmly welcomed into their functions. President Martin Chalk thanked ECA Member Associations for their support for ECA and called upon them to stand ready to join ECA to defend a number of key pilot issues at EU level in 2011. ■



The new ECA Executive Board

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