



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 14 December 2010

ECA Supports our Spanish Member in the Quest for Scientifically based Fatigue Protection for Pilots

The ECA Spanish Member Association, SEPLA, is meeting representatives of the Spanish Authorities to discuss the final draft of a Spanish Royal Decree designed to prevent Pilot Fatigue. Professional Pilot Associations have, for many years, asked the Authorities to provide regulations at the highest scientifically supported level, in order to protect passengers, crew and those who live and work under the flight path.

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) requires that national regulations on pilot fatigue must be based on "scientific principles and knowledge". It includes a precise definition of fatigue and contains guidance for *prescriptive* regulations on Flight Time Limitations (FTL) aimed at ensuring pilot and cabin crew fatigue does not endanger flight safety.

Current EU rules only provide a basic minimum level of protection, already described by an EASA sponsored scientific study in many aspects as 'inadequate'. Until new EASA rules come into force in a few years' time, it is still the responsibility of National Authorities to ensure that their rules are not only compliant with international obligations – but also are safe, given the broad knowledge and experience of fatigue protection in civil aviation.

ECA President, Captain Martin Chalk, supports SEPLA and urges the Spanish Authorities to "ignore the voices who plead profit and commercial advantage ahead of the lives of Spanish Citizens and passengers on Spanish airlines. Pilots are, ahead of all other considerations, committed to each and every flight being a safe flight. It is difficult as a pilot to deliver on a pledge of safety when you are suffering from the insidious effects of fatigue."

"Spain has the unique opportunity to join the most effective regulators in Europe on this issue. We urge the Spanish Authorities to have the courage to advance safety and to do the right thing for their citizens and passengers." added Philip von Schöppenthau, Secretary General of ECA.

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