



Editorial



Nico Voorbach
ECA President

Welcome!

On 24 February I had the honor to be elected as President of ECA. I have the difficult task but also the honor to succeed to Captain Martin Chalk who dedicated 6 years of his career to leading ECA Members at EU level. I am keen on this challenge and I will put my full effort in the difficult tasks that lay ahead of us.

Our major battle this year is the ongoing revision of Europe's Flight Time Limitations (FTL) scheme. Our priority is to ensure that the future FTL rules are not the result of political and economic compromises.

Fatigue contributes to 15-20% of fatal accidents related to human error. This is a reality – and ignoring it would be irresponsible. Safety is at stake! Our lives and our passengers' lives shall not be traded. EASA must establish strong European binding rules and certainly not allow a regression from the existing good national legislation. Our mission is to strive for the highest, scientifically based safety standards. ECA represents more than 38,600 pilots across Europe, and if necessary we have the power to make our voice heard – the argument of power.

Further we have to continue sharing our National and European operational expertise with European decision makers. We are highly skilled professionals and we know better than anyone else how to fly an airplane in safe conditions. We are the last line of defense when things go wrong on board an aircraft. We know most problems and always strive to find the appropriate responses. We are there to make the flight safe, for our passengers, our crew and those living under our flight paths. We know the aircraft and the environment we operate in. We can help the European Commission and its agencies

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Beware: Going to the Lavatories May be Fatal

Upon FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) request, the US airlines have just completed the removal of oxygen generators located in the toilets of some 6000 US registered aircrafts. The news came with the publication of an airworthiness directive issued on March 8. This is a modification that could have serious implications for crew and passengers safety. In case of a sudden and rapid decompression the chances for the lavatories' occupants to survive could be extremely low. The ECA is concerned that other European Member States could take similar decisions.

According to ECA aviation security experts, this move will create a safety hazard when there is a decompression in the aircraft at high altitude. In the event of decompression crew and passengers located in toilets will not be able to get oxygen, possibly resulting in unconsciousness but, in the worst case scenario, in death by suffocation. There are currently no alternative safety equipments or procedures in place to avoid such a situation. To our surprise passengers are not seem to have been informed about the risks they now incur when going to the restroom.

"ECA believes that security measures should never impair safety."

At a normal altitude of 35000 feet the time a person has to reach an oxygen mask is 30 seconds before falling unconscious. A pilot or a crew member has to get an oxygen mask within 10 seconds before his/her judgment starts to alter. At a higher altitude and with the oxygen rarefaction this period falls to 5 seconds. As mentioned by the FAA, Pilots and cabin crew are trained to face decompression events but with no doubt it will take them more than 30 seconds to reach their seat, put their own oxygen mask and start checking all the lavatories on board. This is without mentioning that they may be themselves in the toilets at that time.

In case of decompression the pilots will try to get the aircraft down to a safe altitude as soon as possible. But mountain relief or other aircrafts in the vicinity might temporarily prevent the descent

procedure. In case one of the pilots is in the toilet the remaining pilot will have to perform this procedure on its own with this added stress factor of not knowing if his or her colleague will make it back to the cockpit.

What are the reasons behind such a measure? The FAA and the US intelligence services have identified a theoretical security threat related to the oxygen generators. One would expect that when there are no immediate threats one could expect alternative safety equipments to be

designed and installed first. ECA is concerned that a standing federal safety agency such as the FAA puts security first at the detriment of safety.

During the last 6 months there have been more than 16 cases of decompression reported on European registered aircrafts. Although most of them were not serious it shows that the possibility of a decompression is real.

ECA is seriously concerned by the FAA move and encourages the EU countries to not adopt similar measures despite the fact that the French DGAC seems to have already taken a similar approach. As long as there are no alternative ways of providing oxygen in the toilets, the oxygen masks should not be removed. ECA believes that security measures should never impair safety. Pilots strive to make their flights always safer, they cannot accept that security driven measures endanger their lives and the ones of their passengers! ■

ECA Elects a New President & Professional Affairs Director

On 24 February, during its extraordinary General Assembly, ECA Member Associations elected two new Executive Board members: Nico Voorbach, from the Dutch association, as President of ECA; and Jon Horne, from the British association, as Professional Affairs Director. The General Assembly thanked Martin Chalk, for his dedication as ECA President for the last six years and his great contribution to aviation safety.



Jon Horne, Professional Affairs Director

like EASA, and bodies like Eurocontrol to make flying even safer, more efficient and greener. Our input is essential and shall be taken on board when legislative proposals are drafted.

We will make sure in the coming time that our arguments are heard and our advice taken seriously. For this I will co-ordinate the work together with the ECA team to be as efficient as possible. Our pilot members do the work in Working Groups on a voluntary basis and mostly in their spare time. Not because they have nothing better to do but because they do believe they can make a difference and make flying safer. Your effort and your dedication have to be rewarded. As I said before I am proud to be given the confidence to lead this process and to support our pilot volunteers and staff. Together we can keep flying safe and make sure that safety is not traded in for commercial benefits. ■

EASA Proposed Rules on Flight Time Limitations



On 21 March, the comment period to the EASA Notice of Proposed Amendment on the EU's future Pilot Fatigue rules came to an end. On behalf of its 38,600 pilots from 38 countries, ECA

contributed to this process and sent some 130 comments on the text, asking for more science-based rules.

Thanks to all the ECA safety experts who actively worked on these comments!

Meetings

- 15 Mar.:** ECA Trans National Airlines Working Group, Brussels, BE
- 16 Mar.:** ECA Industrial Working Group, Brussels, BE
- 15-17 Mar.:** EASA Aerodrome Rule-making Tasks, Cologne, DE
- 22-24 Mar.:** ECA Executive Board Meeting, Brussels, BE
- 22 Mar.:** Industry Consultative Body, Brussels, BE
- 22-23 Mar.:** EASA Helicopter Safety Team, Cologne, DE
- 29-31 Mar.:** Eurocontrol ANT Meeting, Brussels, BE
- 31 Mar.:** SESAR Joint Undertaking Quarterly Meeting, Brussels, BE
- 8-12 April:** IFALPA Conference, Chiang Mai, TH
- 9 April:** ECA Conference, Chiang Mai, TH

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.

Following the election in November 2010 of two new Technical Directors (Francis Nardy and Álvaro Gammicchia), these two new additions to the team strength ECA's Executive Board. The election of a new President is a very important step in any association's lifetime, as it determines the path that the association wants to take.

Nico Voorbach, a B-777 pilot working at KLM, stressed during his speech that the pilot profession faces many challenges in Europe, with pilot unity at EU level being the only means to be successful in

achieving higher levels of aviation safety and security in Europe.

Martin Chalk, who has served as ECA President for the last six years, was applauded and thanked by all the Member Associations for his strong commitment to and involvement in the cause of aviation safety. In his farewell words, he thanked the Member Associations for their support all over these years and stressed that the election of a new Board is an opportunity for ECA to bring new ideas that will help achieve ECA's aims. ■

ECA Aviation Safety Day: You, Pilots, Can Shape your Profession!

On 23-24 February, some 50 European pilots attended in Brussels the ECA Aviation Safety Day to discuss how this "invisible hand" called Europe affects their profession and how pilots can contribute to the future of aviation safety. The event also showed the need for pilots to get involved, given the many challenges ahead.



For the second year in a row, ECA organised a special event placing aviation safety at the centre. Pilots were briefed on the functioning of the EU Institutions and how ECA and - more importantly - how pilots can actively contribute to shape European aviation safety legislation. The idea was to interact as much as possible with the audience and to provide them with real examples how the European institutions, Eurocontrol and the European Aviation Safety Agency affect their everyday piloting, even if the individual pilots may not always realise their huge impact.

During the 2-day event, the ECA Team, assisted by pilot experts from its Members and external speakers, covered issues like laser attacks, security screening differentiation, EU research projects such as CleanSky and new cockpit technologies, EU Safety Strategy and Health and Safety.

A direct result of the event is a move to bring our Member Associations together on Health and Safety issues and to involve ECA in workshops on new cockpit technologies. ECA is also considering getting involved in the CleanSky stakeholder consultation.

But the main success of the event is probably that it showed that each individual pilot is an expert in their field; and every pilot can shape their own profession. ECA is hopeful that this event inspired new pilots to get involved in ECA, in order to contribute to the wide range of safety issues covered by ECA - Working Groups (for details see <http://www.eurocockpit.be/pages/eca-structure>). So, if we 'caught the bug', feel free to contact ECA through your national pilots' association! ■



ECA Has Moved!

Our new offices are located on the same street as before, just a hundred meters down the road, Rue du Commerce 20-22, in Brussels.

We look forward to welcoming you in our new offices!

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