



Editorial



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ALPA International Air Safety Forum

From 15 to 18 August, ALPA International (our

North American counterpart) held their yearly Air Safety Forum, where I had the opportunity to speak about ECA's work in the security area. This event is one of the most interesting events on Aviation Safety organised by pilots and attended by some 500+ representatives worldwide – from US Government Officials to National pilots' associations and aircraft manufacturers. With "One level of Safety: 80 years and counting" as the theme of this year's edition, ALPA-I reiterated their continuing commitment to improving aviation safety worldwide. Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA-I's President, opened the plenary session expressing concerns regarding the delay in the publication of new pilot fatigue rules by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and urged the Government to take action on this important subject.

Keynote speakers from around the world were invited to present on a wide range of safety issues: from pilot training to aviation security and human factors. One particularly interesting and topical presentation was given by Dr. Immanuel Barshi (NASA) on human factors. As he explained, saying that an accident has been caused by "human error" is actually uninformative, as the human factor is everywhere – from the design to the operation of the aircraft. Very often, technology is well ahead of humans, which explains why it gets more and more complicated to understand it. And although training is essential, it is not the panacea. He there-

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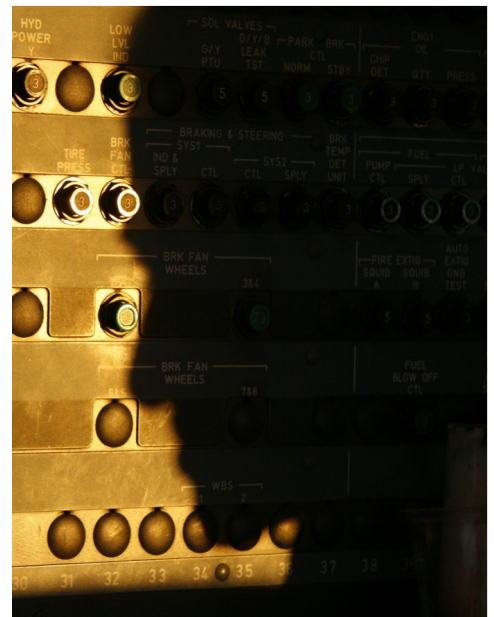
EASA Conference on "Staying in control" – Pilots Not Relevant?

"Past years have demonstrated that "Loss of Control" (LoC) is still a major contributor to aviation accidents, including large transport aircraft accidents" EASA rightly states in the announcement of its Conference "Staying in Control" (4-5 Oct. 2011). And it is pilots who have to stay in control of highly automated aircraft. But this basic fact apparently did not trigger EASA to inviting ECA's safety experts to speak and share their operational experience. Instead, ECA will be there... to listen and learn why us, pilots, seem to be losing control.

ECA actually supports discussions on this important and complex safety issue. And as recent accidents highlighted again, pilot training and basic flying skills have shown to be key elements in this respect. The pilot community defined the need for more training of basic flying skills already a year ago when we co-organised the IFALPA Pilot Training Standards (IPTS) workshop in Paris in October 2010 (see [IPTS position paper](#)). As we reported in our [May 2011 Cockpit News](#): *"Add to this the challenge to cope with the ever in-creasing automation on the flight deck. Key questions therefore arise: shall we train pilots to understand what the plane is doing and teach them to simply "manage" the airplane? Or shall we train pilots to be able to really fly the plane using the so-called "stick and rudder skills" used since the dawn of aviation? The answers will shape the future aviation safety level."*

What is it that makes a good pilot? What does the job require: aviators or system managers? The answer is that the job requires both skill sets and the ability to switch between the two as rapidly and frequently as the circumstances require. This of course means that core "stick and rudder" flying skills need to be better trained and IPTS also provides ways how this can be accomplished.

Is this the only solution on how to deal with loss of control? Probably not, but



Picture by Ariel Shocrón

pilot training will have to be a big part of it. As will probably a fresh look at EASA's proposal for new pilot licensing and training standards, to ensure pilot skills are strengthened rather than loosened.

As EASA says in its invitation *"This Conference will enable the aviation community to meet and to share the most updated information related to this issue with highly knowledgeable aviation specialists in Aviation Safety from EASA, FAA, NASA, Industry and Investigation Boards."* Isn't it a pity that European professional pilots are not invited to share their daily, hands-on experience? It just might have brought something useful to the discussion. ■

fore suggests a more human-centred approach to flight safety, i.e. by involving pilots from the very beginning of the design process, the aircraft will be better suited to the humans. Some interesting points that deserve special thought...

The forum was not only interesting from a content point of view, but also an opportunity to discuss common interest with other pilot representatives. It was the occasion for the Presidents of ECA, ALPA-I and IFALPA (International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations) to engage in direct talks on how to improve coordination between our three associations. We have a lot of issues of common interest – such as Flight Time Limitations or Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS) implementation to mention a few. Consequently, the sharing of knowledge and expertise on technical issues is paramount in achieving our common goal. The three associations therefore agreed to work more closely together and meet at least three times a year, so we can combine our strengths and make a more efficient use of our resources.

This event showed once more the commitment of hundreds of volunteer pilots working in their spare time to make flying safer. The attendance of the US FAA, ICAO and Aircraft manufacturers also demonstrated that they highly appreciate pilots' contribution. In Europe, EASA seems to have a different appreciation of our input, when not inviting us to speak at a Conference on Loss of Control as you can read elsewhere in this edition. However, we as ECA - Board, Staff and volunteer experts - will continue to commit to improving aviation safety. ■

Next Meetings

4-5 Oct.: EASA Loss of Control Conference, Cologne, DE

6 Oct.: ECA ATMA WG, Brussels, BE

12-13 Oct.: ECA Executive Board Meeting, Brussels, BE

17 Oct.: ECA Legal Group, Brussels

18 Oct.: ECA Health & Safety Meeting, Brussels, BE

17-19 Oct.: IFALPA Industrial & Legal Committees, Madrid, ES

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.

Beyond the Rules – Managing Fatigue Risks

Late this summer, the International Civil Aviation Organisation organised a "Fatigue Risk Management System" (FRMS) Symposium, followed by a FRMS Forum, in Montreal. Attended by over 500 participants – including safety experts from ECA – this important event demonstrated that prescriptive rules are a necessary basis, but not sufficient to manage fatigue. Compliance with the rules does not mean an operation is safe. Instead, fatigue needs to be managed proactively and FRMS is an important additional tool in that respect. However, the event also showed that FRMS is still a young new concept which will take time to work as intended.

Only if operators, crews and the national Authorities are fully committed to managing fatigue in a responsible and cooperative way, and only if they put in the necessary resources – including for effective oversight by the Authorities – will FRMS show the way for the future.

It is therefore encouraging that two FRMS guides were presented: one for helping national Authorities to understand, approve and control FRMS, and a second one for the operators. The latter is the result of a partnership between ICAO, IFALPA (International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Association) and IATA (International Air Transport Association), and should become the industry's reference document. Because, if operators consider FRMS simply as an easy way out of the prescriptive rules – rather than using it to provide for an equivalent or even higher level of safety – FRMS could undermine safety levels rather than increasing them.

The good news is that almost everywhere fatigue risks are now addressed as a safety issue that needs to be taken seriously. All three co-authors of the Operators' Guide – ICAO, IFALPA, IATA – recognize that fatigue is a contributing factor in airplane accidents. And some Authorities, like the US FAA are keen to be proactive. In the US legislation FRMS will remain optional, but a detailed 'Fatigue Risk Management Plan' is mandatory for air carriers (part 121). This is a significant move: Fatigue has to be managed proactively through

a plan within each airline. Non-compliance with that plan will ultimately lead to the airline facing civil penalties.

In Europe, however, the approach looks different. Based on the presentation made by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Europe seems to be one step behind the international community. EASA seems to start from the premise that prescriptive rules are "safe enough". Hence, Fatigue Risk Management (FRM) will not be mandatory. It will only be "required to those using certain special provisions or derogating from the prescriptive rules" e.g. in cases of reduced rest, certain flight duty extensions, certain night operations and East-West or West-East transits.

FRMS is a safety net that has to be added in the whole safety organization, as stated by Dr Curt Graeber, leader of the ICAO FRMS Task Force. So, why should Europe choose to rely mainly on prescriptive rules compliance? – As EASA's rules are not yet finalized, it remains to be seen whether the Agency will eventually embrace a more proactive approach.

To conclude with Dr Graeber: "FRMS represents a paradigm shift in managing fatigue as a safety risk, and offers a major opportunity to improve aviation safety worldwide". Something the 'old Europe' still needs to get ready for. ■

For more information: http://www.frmsforum.org/meetings_and_conferences/september_2011_conference/index.html

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