



## Editorial



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ECA President

### A New Year – Same Challenges

Since our last edition in December 2011, a lot has happened in the aviation world. First of all, at the beginning of December, I went to Zagreb upon request from our Croatian member (CRO-ALPA) to support them in their fight against the change in the interpretation of split duty by the Croatian Government and Croatian Airlines. They organised a big demonstration in front of the building of the Croatian Civil Aviation Authority. CRO-ALPA used this opportunity to also express their concern about the upcoming legislation on pilot fatigue that is being drafted by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). Although Croatia is not yet a member of the European Union, they are planning to join in 2013 and the European legislation will therefore also become law in Croatia.

CRO-ALPA showed me how a relatively small association is able to successfully mobilise their members and get the attention and support of the media and the public. At the demonstration all major television, radio and written media were present; they prepared good material, including leaflets, a press kit and a video to support their actions. Out of 140 pilot members, 97 were present at the demonstration. The remaining pilots were flying. The pilots were joined by representatives of the cabin crew union, flight engineers union and the air traffic controllers, as safety concerns all aviation professions and it is important to remain united in this battle. I was really impressed by their work and the outcome of the demonstration. This best practice shows that

## Low-cost Outsourcing – A New Trend with Doubtful Benefits

**One after the other, the 'legacy' carriers endeavour to establish low cost subsidiaries. Mostly this is done without involving the pilot associations whose members are directly concerned by such changes. This new trend is a radical break with the pre-existing culture of co-operation between pilots and management.**

At a time when the airline industry is being restructured and tries to consolidate the markets it operates, the legacy carriers are trying to enter the low-cost market. And many are eyeing the Ryanair business model. So, why is this model so enviable and so unattainable at the same time?

The so-called 'legacy' carriers are companies built on a solid regulatory framework and are sometimes built on a heavy administrative structure. They built their business model on creating a network within a particular market, developing passengers' services and offering connections all over the world. Low-cost carriers, however, fly point-to-point destinations and do not offer connections to their passengers.

In 2008, British Airways set up a low-cost airline, called 'Openskies', targeted at the business segment of the market. The year after, Iberia took over Vueling and Clickair. In 2010, Olympic re-emerged from bankruptcy as a low-cost company. And this year, Iberia is striving to set up its own low-cost subsidiary Iberia Express.

These are just a few examples of this new trend. The problem in their attempt to compete in the low-cost market, is that they kept their own business model and focused on lowering their costs and/or outsourcing their activities. The commercial success of Ryanair is not only due to lower costs but Ryanair actually turns costs into profits.

Where a legacy carrier or its subsidiary pays airport fees, Ryanair receives subsidies. Where companies focus on reducing pilots' salaries, Ryanair gains money on pilot training, ID cards, uni-

forms etc. Ryanair's strategy is to open bases in secondary airports and hence be able to exercise pressure on the local authorities to maintain favourable conditions that no other airline can expect. While legacy carriers consider the passengers as their clients, the Irish low cost airline considers the local authorities to be its clients.

Hence we see a trend from companies to turn against Pilot unions and professional associations and to point the finger at them for being the cause of their financial turmoil. This is mistaken. Pilots and their unions are not the reason why airlines cannot compete fairly within the European market. The EU leaders should take their responsibility and make sure that competition in the European aviation market is not distorted and that EU rules on competition are enforced on all players in the market.

Pilot unions are quite often valuable partners for the management in times of economic change, and promoters of a safety culture within companies. The next edition of Cockpit News will explore this role in more detail. ■

### Spanair & Malev Cease of Operations

It is with great regret that ECA learnt about Spanair and Malev cease of operations. Our thoughts go to all the pilots, the other employees and their families.



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EVERY association can have a big impact and change things.

The second noticeable news of the end of the year was the publication (at last!) by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the new rules for Flight Times Limitations, as a Christmas present, on 21 December. Although the release of the text had been delayed several times due to strong lobbying from the airlines, the FAA chose aviation safety over commercial interests. The big hole of this legislation, however, is that it excludes all cargo operations from the new rules. This is a pity given that pilots equally suffer from fatigue and have the same safety risks, whether they transport passengers or cargo... But it is, at least, a step in the right direction and we hope that EASA will follow the lead.

Last but not least, the main event of 2012 so far was the publication of the EASA new draft rules on pilot fatigue on 18 January. As stated in our press release, EASA did make important improvements to their first proposal but they still lag behind the FAA and crucial changes need to be done to reach EU-wide rules at the highest level of safety. We therefore have to continue our battle: you can read more about this issue in this newsletter and by visiting our brand-new website: [www.dead-tired.eu](http://www.dead-tired.eu).

February will mark the sad anniversary of the deadly Colgan Air accident in the US, which demonstrates the safety risks associated with pilot fatigue. We hope that, in 2012, the airlines and the European Union will finally realise that our passengers deserve safer air transport and will adopt solid, science-based Flight Time Limitations rules. ■

## Next Meetings

**8-9 Feb.:** Flight Time Limitations Working Group, Brussels, BE

**15-16 Feb.:** ECA Executive Board, Brussels, BE

**21 Feb.:** ECA Presidents' Meeting, Frankfurt, DE

**23 Feb.:** EASA Safety Committee, Cologne, DE

**28-29 Feb.:** ECA Security Working Group, 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](http://www.eurocockpit.be).

## Fatigue – Why Europe Can't Afford to Sleep

**On 18 January, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) published its revised proposal for Europe's future air crew fatigue rules. It took 50.000 stakeholder comments and the reports from three eminent scientists to make the Agency carry out some urgently needed changes to its initial proposal from 2010. And it took surveys among pilots in several EU countries to demonstrate that fatigue is a reality in Europe's cockpits. But while the revised proposal brings some welcome changes, it still ignores key scientific findings on some important issues. Further changes are therefore required to protect passenger safety.**

**71%-90%** of pilots surveyed in Sweden, Denmark and Norway said they made operational errors due to fatigue, with 50-54% acknowledging they dozed off in the cockpit without agreeing this with their colleague. In the UK, a recent survey showed that, of those pilots who say they have fallen asleep, 31% have woken up and found the other pilot asleep. And a survey among UK Aero-medical examiners (AMEs) shows that 68% of AMEs think pilots often fall asleep without even realising it themselves, and 75% of AMEs consider that up to 25% of pilots are too tired to fly safely.

These and other comparable surveys confirm what we already know: that we do have a safety issue in Europe's cockpits. They also confirm what scientific research has shown: today's EU fatigue rules are insufficient to protect airline passengers against the safety risks of fatigued pilots.

It is therefore difficult to understand that EASA disregards unanimous scientific and medical evidence in many provisions of its latest proposal. Whereas some clearly unsafe provisions of its previous proposal have



been removed – like the French regional airline inspired practice of reducing rest time between duties to as little as 7:30 hrs, EASA closes its eyes to other issues.

For example, the three scientific assessments EASA commissioned in 2011 conclude that flying at night should be limited to 10 hours, as anything above would create critical levels of fatigue and hence a potential safety risk. And yet, after the airlines claimed this would hurt their business, EASA set the limit at 11 hours at night.

Another example is airport standby followed by a flight. EASA's proposal would allow a crewmember having started his/her standby at 07:00 in the morning to fly until 01:00 next morning, or even 03:00 in case of unforeseen delays. This is 20 hours from the start of the standby and would require the pilot to land the plane safely having been awake for 22 hrs. Under the new USA fatigue rules this would be illegal.

EASA needs to do better. And it can. Scientific and medical research shows the way, but EASA stopped half way with its latest proposal. Now it is time to take the remaining steps. ■

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