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ECA President

Our Thoughts Are with our Colleagues

We have seen on a number of occasions in the last few months, that the constant efforts to improve the safety performance of our industry should never be relaxed. Colleagues from Germany, Turkey and New Zealand have all lost their lives in recent aircraft crashes in Europe; on behalf of all ECA's members and affiliates, our thoughts are with their family, colleagues and friends.

Every accident reminds us that we have not achieved the goal of a zero fatal accident rate. The US recently commissioned research under Senator Al Gore. It came to the conclusion that this was indeed an achievable aim – and the European Commission has the stated aim of a tenfold increase in safety levels. Both will mean that we need to ensure we apply all the lessons of the past – including appropriate accident and incident investigation procedures. Our late German, Turkish and New Zealand colleagues deserve the very highest standards of investigation into their accidents and it does not help that ill informed press speculation and headline hungry politicians and other 'self publicists' always seem to be jostling for media position following such tragedies.

Elsewhere in this edition of Cockpit News, you can read of ECA's efforts to support appropriately targeted inspections of aircraft, with high quality inspectors to a harmonised European standard; our promotion of a single harmonised standard for biometric crew identity cards and our own efforts to ensure we are prepared to confront tomorrow's issues even more assertively and efficiently than we do today's.

Later this month, ECA will also be active at the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Association's Annual Conference. **Unity of purpose** to ensure ever higher safety standards, **unity of pur-**

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Aviation Security: A Fortress with Open Doors

Our legislator craves for our airports to be impregnable fortresses. Yet, due to the hesitations of certain stakeholders, there are no common standards regarding crew identity (ID) cards, which allow access all the way into the fortress. All the barriers and controls in place could fail if crew ID cards are not verifiable and secure. ECA is calling for the establishment of a common crew ID card with biometrics, based on ICAO standards, which would be recognised all over Europe.

Today, there are no clear rules in Europe on how to identify crew members accessing their aircraft. The most commonly used document, the company ID card, has mostly no official value, but is de facto recognised by security officials. However, the widespread availability of high quality printing equipment threatens the authenticity of non-secure crew ID cards. The lack of common standards makes it very difficult for security officials to recognise the card's authenticity.

Different airports and Member States have taken their own measures to respond to this concern and issued their own ID cards. This obliges some crew members to carry as many as 5 different cards to be able to carry out their work! Checks and procedures differ from one airport to the other. This unnecessarily complicates and prolongs the crew's duties and creates confusion. Airlines have to design different ID cards for each of their bases, especially when operating from bases in different Member States.

An example of individual measures is the decision taken at some UK airports to require security officials to check every pilot and cabin crew's ID cards against a sample to be provided by their operator beforehand. How long does this take? How many samples can be realistically handled? Does this really protect against fake cards?

To ensure a reliable identification of crews, some Airports and Authorities are investing in new ID technologies. Most of

them include biometrics. The problem is that their new systems work only for the crews based at their airports ignoring the fact that crews necessarily fly to different airports.

Cost is often invoked as a barrier for the development of common crew ID cards. The fact is that biometric will soon replace old "simple" cards anyway. Airports and Member States' new investments in biometrics represent a unique opportunity to achieve common interoperable systems all over Europe. However, this will *only* be possible if the new EU Security legislation sets common standards as a matter of urgency. The cost of not setting such standards *now* will surely exceed the investments needed in the future to harmonise divergent technologies that were developed in a chaotic, uncoordinated way.



The technology is available. ICAO has set the standards that could be recognised not only at EU level, but in a global perspective. All the necessary research has already been carried out when developing the standards for travelling documents and EU passports. What stops the EU and its Member States to apply this knowledge to create a lean, efficient and secure crew ID card system in Europe?

If millions are spent in ensuring the security of airplanes, it seems logic to invest in the document deemed to identify in a positive and harmonized way the persons that are going to take command of the aircrafts. ■

tion of the aircraft and the presence and condition of mandatory cabin safety equipment.

SAFA: Efforts underway for Safety ?

Since 2007, European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has been in charge of the Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft program (SAFA), which began in 1996 under the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC).

A SAFA inspection consists of a ramp inspection during a turnround of an aircraft. It is based mainly on aircraft and crew documents or licenses, the condi-

tion of the aircraft and the presence and condition of mandatory cabin safety equipment.

pose to ensure mutual support in times of need as well as **unity of purpose** to face ever stronger competition and attacks on our livelihoods – all require a strong engagement of Pilot Associations of all types with each other. ECA will be leading the way! ■

77 Days Left to Comment on NPA OPS!

As outlined in the February issue of our Cockpit News, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) published on 30 January its 1000-page Notices of Proposed Amendment on Air Operations (NPA OPS).

To facilitate this ambitious process, ECA has set up a special section on its website (<http://www.eurocockpit.be/content/view/690/563/>), containing the main documents and information on internal deadlines.



77: the number of days remaining for ECA's experts to agree on common comments and deliver them to EASA. ECA's members have already deployed a large pool of experts for this huge task, but all pilots who are willing to contribute are most welcome to join forces! We count on YOU! ■

Please contact pg@eurocockpit.be

Next Meetings

16-18 March: 21st European Annual Safety Seminar (ESSI), Nicosia, CY

16 March: Working Group on Runway Incursions, Brussels, BE

17-19 March: ATC Global 2009 Conference & Exhibition, Amsterdam, NL

17 March: EASA Advisory Board meeting with EASA Executive Director, Cologne, DE

20-24 March: IFALPA Annual Conference and Regional Meetings, Auckland, NZ

24-25 March: Eurocontrol Airport Operations Team, Brussels, BE

31 March: ETSC Aviation Safety Lunch, Brussels, BE

1-2 April: ECA Executive Board Meeting, Brussels, BE

The **European Cockpit Association** is the association of Flight Crew Unions from European States. Based in Brussels, ECA has 36 Member Associations, representing over **38.200** pilots from 36 countries. For more information: www.eurocockpit.be.

Inspectors use a checklist comprising 54 items. If they find any deviation, they classify it in one of three categories of findings: cat 1 is minor, cat 2 means significant and cat 3 major.

The two last categories of findings are reported to the responsible Aviation Authority and the operator to prevent reoccurrence and in some rare cases, restriction of the aircraft operation can be taken, up to the grounding of the aircraft.

The EU commission has recently published the results for 2007: compared to 2006 and the previous years, it shows an increase of

inspections (roughly 8,600 in 2007 compared to less than 5,500 in 2004), and a decrease in findings (about 12,000 in total for 2007, 500 less than in 2006).

Operators from the EU 27 states, ECAC and Oceania have fewer findings than the average.

The results are only giving a global overview as there is no breakdown inside the different world regions or between operators inspected. It is also positive to see that more action than ever before, have been taken according to cat 2 and 3 findings: i.e. 22 aircraft were grounded in 2007 following a SAFA inspection.

However for ECA, further efforts are needed to improve the quality of the SAFA programme:

- better standardisation to be delivered by EASA among the National Aviation Authorities (i.e. countries have very different rates of average findings per inspection).
- better trained and resourced NAA, especially in newer EU states.
- more intelligent, better targeted and risk based inspections carried out by properly trained inspectors.

"We encourage pilots to report their experience of SAFA inspections to ECA, to determine whether the recent unpleasant experiences reported are only isolated cases or if these are more widespread practices."

On one very specific point, ECA has noticed there were a few inspections that were an unpleasant experience for the flight crews.

We encourage pilots to report their experience to ECA, so that we can determine whether these are just a few isolated cases or whether there is a particular country or airport, where unacceptable behaviour of inspectors is more widespread.

With safety oriented inspectors, flight crews represented in ECA are ready to play their part in future SAFA inspections.

It is European aviation safety that will finally benefit. ■

ECA Ready to Face New Challenges!

2008 was a challenging year for ECA and its Member Associations. BA Open Skies, Subpart Q entering into force, Alitalia Phoenix Rescue Plan and EASA taking up new mandates are only a few of the issues pilots have been dealing with. In 2009, while still addressing these issues, ECA will have to deal with 2009's new challenges, such as EASA's comprehensive Notices of Proposed Amendments on Licensing and Operations. At its last Conference, held in Brussels on 11 and 12 February, ECA's members recognised this context and the need to, now more than ever, be unified and well-equipped for the future.

The Member Associations discussed in which detail both the current challenges and the future role of ECA. They decided to create two "Review Groups" – one long-term and one short-term –, whose aims are to assess ECA's current structure and to identify ways to adapt it to current and future challenges.



They also debated the apparent reluctance of EASA to follow up on its own scientifically based review of Flight Time Limitations regulations, and the potential actions

that might be taken to support the Agency and Commission in fully implementing its recommendations as soon as possible.

ECA's members also chose to strengthen ECA's Brussels-based structure, reinforcing the ECA team (see picture) by hiring, later in 2009, two new staff members – resulting in 9 employees at the ECA office.

These decisions constitute a further big step in the representation of pilots in Europe and will strengthen ECA's ability to face 2009's many challenges. ■

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