

PRESS RELEASE

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Aviation Safety Lessons Must Be Learnt Industry Calls for Independent Accident Investigations

Europe is seeking to strengthen aviation safety through the current proposal for a new Accident Investigation Regulation. But this unique opportunity risks being lost if the EU Institutions don't act! – This is the message of 14 aviation industry organisations in their joint statement, issued today.

Accident investigations are key drivers for safety improvements, an opportunity to learn from accidents to prevent them from re-occurring. As safety professionals, pilots and air traffic controllers cooperate in such investigations and provide safety testimony. However, the proposed Regulation does not protect this testimony from being used in criminal proceedings. If this is not changed, safety information will stop flowing.

"Today's unique joint message sent by 14 aviation stakeholder organisations to the EU decision-makers is strong and unambiguous: the future Regulation must fully protect safety data and information if we want to continue improving air safety and preventing future accidents" says Capt. Martin Chalk, ECA President. "The use of safety information in judicial proceedings should be strictly limited to clearly defined cases."

IFATCA President Alexis Brathwaite stresses: "The threat of individual criminal prosecution following the participation in an aviation accident investigation and the use of safety data would mean the end of flight safety advancement, exactly the opposite of the stated aim of the proposed Regulation."

"Safety and judicial investigations must be fully independent from each other" adds Philip von Schöppenthau, ECA Secretary General. "But the text agreed by the Council of Ministers, last March, even worsens the situation. It would force pilots and others to stop cooperating in safety investigations, simply to protect themselves against judicial prosecution. Therefore our hopes are with the the European Parliament which we strongly encourage to amend the Commission proposal and to resist the Council's regrettable anti-safety stance".

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ECA/IFATCA Position Paper & List of Amendments:

(<http://www.eurocockpit.be/ai-position>) (<http://www.eurocockpit.be/ai-amendments-shortlist>)