



## PRESS RELEASE

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### EU Parliament Votes for Swift Safety Review of Flight Time Limitations and Rejects downward harmonisation.

On 5<sup>th</sup> July, the European Parliament Plenary voted in 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading that Flight Time Limitations (FTL) for flight crew – as proposed in the "EU-OPS" Regulation<sup>1</sup> – must be subject to a scientific evaluation within 2 years, to ensure that pilot fatigue does not endanger flight safety. MEPs also adopted a "Non-regression clause". This is to guarantee EU Member States do not abuse the Regulation for lowering existing higher safety standards. It is a clear rejection of downward harmonisation.

The European Cockpit Association (ECA), representing over **34.700 pilots** from across Europe, congratulates the EP to have insisted on these amendments during the informal Trialogue with Council in late June, thereby defending ECA's key demands.

The EU's good governance principle states that major new legislation must be subject to an **Impact and Safety Assessment**, before adoption. The EU-OPS Regulation and its FTL provisions never went through such an assessment. The scientific evaluation of the new rules must therefore be started swiftly and be concluded on time !

The EP also insisted that **EASA and the Commission** have to **make proposals – "without delay" – for changing the FTL rules**, in line with the evaluation's results.

Crucially, the EP agreed to ECA's core demand to insert a **Non-regression clause to prevent a race to the lowest legally possible bottom**. Stiff competitive pressure in air transport encourages companies already today to look for savings, including on FTL. This clause, despite having been watered down in the Trialogue, will put a moral obligation upon EU Member States not to downgrade safety.

The Council of Ministers will formally approve the EU-OPS text probably by Sept. 2006. The new FTL rules will enter into force the following day, with Member States having up to 18 months to implement them.

Capt. Henk de Vries, Vice-President of ECA stressed: "ECA and our national Member Associations will **monitor very closely each Member State's implementation**. We need to ensure that passengers', flight crew and the general public's safety is not compromised. We will also work closely with the Commission and EASA to **guarantee that the scientific evaluation will** be carried out and that it will **lead to a swift revision of the FTL rules** to enhance flight safety in Europe."

For further information on FTL please contact: Philip von Schöppenthau, Secretary General or Ignacio Plaza, Legal Advisor, Tel: +32-2-705.32.93 and visit: [www.eurocockpit.be](http://www.eurocockpit.be)

<sup>1</sup> Draft Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EEC) n° 3922/91 on the harmonisation of technical requirements and administrative procedures in the field of civil aviation (EU-OPS).