



PRESS RELEASE

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New European Pilot Fatigue Rules Come into Force. Do Airlines and Authorities Neglect Flight Safety?

On 16 July, all airlines and EU countries must apply new legislation on "Flight Time Limitations" (FTL). This aims to prevent pilot fatigue becoming a risk to the passengers' safety. While most passengers will not be aware of this important event, it is a potential milestone for aviation safety in Europe.

However, many airlines and countries are unlikely to be ready, despite having had 18 months to prepare. Will aircraft be grounded if they don't comply with EU safety rules? Are the new rules as safe as they should be?

Grounding aircraft not in compliance with EU safety law would be action passengers would normally expect from their National Aviation Authorities. Such grounding, however, is unlikely to happen as nobody wants thousands of holiday-makers stranded at airports.

Despite the legal obligation to adapt their Operations Manuals and their pilots' individual "rosters" (i.e. flight schedules) to the new rules, many airlines failed to do so. Pilots risk being programmed over the new limits, with legal and operational uncertainty being likely to remain for months to come.

Crucially, several EU states have used the introduction of the new European FTL rules as a pretext to downgrade their previously higher safety standards, by aligning their national legislation with the lower EU minimum. In addition, many countries opted for low safety standards in areas left open by the new EU FTL regulation, disregarding scientific evidence and safety data from accidents.

"Lower safety standards rather than higher ones – this is definitely not the aim of the legislator, what passengers expect, and what pilots had fought for" says Philip von Schöppenthau, Secretary General of ECA.

"The good news is that in most countries the new EU rules are stricter than the old ones. We now expect that each country and each airline guarantees the highest safety standards and ensures the correct application of the law. Only then can passengers trust that their safety is taken seriously – both by the airlines and their National Authorities."

For more information click here: <http://www.eurocockpit.be/content/view/414/252/>

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