



PRESS RELEASE

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Scientific Basis for Flight Time Rules Mandated by New ICAO Annex Amendment

– EU Member States Prefer to Look Away –

As of today, EU Member States will be bound by new air safety standards – developed by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) – requiring that national pilot fatigue regulations shall be based on “scientific principles and knowledge”. However, despite the availability of a recent scientific review of Europe’s fatigue rules, neither the national regulations nor the EU-wide rules are based on scientific evidence, except for the United Kingdom’s “CAP 371”. From today, ICAO inspectors will be able to denounce EU Member States for non-conformity with internationally agreed safety standards unless they swiftly implement rule improvements in line with latest scientific evidence.

The text of the amended ICAO Annex 6 – adopted in March 2009 – is the result of more than 8 years of work in ICAO. It includes for the first time a precise definition of fatigue and contains new guidance for *prescriptive* regulations on Flight Time Limitations (FTL) aimed at ensuring pilot and cabin crew fatigue does not endanger flight safety.

“This new Annex 6 clearly shows that pilot fatigue rules which lack a sound scientific basis are not acceptable under international safety requirements” said Philip von Schöppenthau, ECA Secretary General. *“But we wonder how EU Member States will comply with these new ICAO standards. Since September 2008, we have scientific evidence at hand, showing that current EU and national rules are insufficient to adequately protect against fatigue-related safety risks. For more than one year, EU Member States preferred to look away, pointing at ‘Brussels’ for action, and in the meantime being quite happy to continue with the status quo. One year lost for aviation safety improvements!”*

For ECA President, Captain Martin Chalk, *“the new ICAO Annex is well timed. It reminds the EU Institutions they have to modernise the EU’s FTL rules. After more than a year of inaction, it is high time for them to incorporate their own recommendations from a recent EASA-Commissioned scientific study of these rules. In the meantime, EU Member States must comply with their obligations individually as ICAO members and bring their national fatigue laws in line with scientific knowledge. Not doing so would be a neglect of their duty to the travelling public and a choice difficult to justify in the case of an accident.”*

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Visit our FTL section on the ECA web: <http://www.eurocockpit.be/index.php/ftl-section> or
our European Air Crew Fatigue Day site www.dead-tired.eu