



**ECA**  
Piloting Safety

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Pilot Training Compass: Back to the Future

Early investment in good basic flying skills and fluency in critical manoeuvres are essential elements of effective pilot training programs, even and especially at times of increasing automation and proliferations of technology. A new report published on 28 Feb takes a critical look at pilot training programs and suggests a way forward to keep pace with the demand for professional, high-skilled flight crews in a competitive but safety-critical aviation environment.

[“Pilot Training Compass: Back to the Future”](#), the latest report by the European Cockpit Association, touches upon the overall scope of the pilot’s profession and training programs, including the selection principles and competencies necessary for airline pilots. Among the most important conclusions of the report is that pilots have to be able to develop and seamlessly shift between different skills sets, i.e. sophisticated flight deck management skills as well as very fundamental flying skills. Yet, these core skills, such as performing a hand-flown approach, still are the foundation of pilot professionalism and airmanship.

“The discussions about a potential looming pilot shortage, exacerbated by the economic downturn, have narrowed down the debate on how to simply train more people faster. This report shifts the emphasis to the far more important questions of **which skills** actually have to be trained and **how** they need to be trained”, states ECA President, Nico Voorbach. “The future requires us to reclaim some basic aviation principles from the past.”

The report identifies several shortfalls of current pilot training programs, such as a one-size-fits-all approach and continuous cutbacks in training programs. Looking beyond a quick-fix solution to training programs shortcomings, it proposes a comprehensive Pilot Training Management System, which will help implement and improve training programs by involving all stakeholders, including pilots.

“When all instruments fail, there will still be an old-fashioned compass in the cockpit to navigate; likewise when all automation gives up, the pilot needs to be able to carry out a safe landing. For this we present the compass that points to the right direction for satisfactory and profound pilot training programs”, says Pete Kaumanns, ECA Executive Board Director for Technical Affairs. “Pilot involvement is crucial not only when selecting the right pilot candidates but also when identifying the key areas of pilot training. In the end of the day, a safe, sustainable lifetime performance by pilots is something we all strive for.”

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*Note to editors:* ECA is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 38.000 pilots from across Europe. Website: [www.eurocockpit.be](http://www.eurocockpit.be).