



ECA
Piloting Safety

ECA Welcomes Safety Recommendations

– Final Accident Investigation Report on Germanwings 4U9525 –

ECA welcomes the final accident investigation [report](#), presented by the French Accident Investigation body BEA, on 13 March 2016. It constitutes a fact-based in-depth assessment of the various interrelated factors that contributed to the tragedy in which 150 people perished. Today, almost one year after the accident, Europe's pilot community's thoughts are with those who lost their lives, their relatives and friends.

The BEA's safety recommendations constitute a comprehensive, well-balanced package of measures that will help to make a Germanwings-like scenario less likely in future, and to make an already safe industry even more resilient towards specific risks.

It is crucial, as the report rightly stresses, that “due to the strong interdependency between matters” the BEA's recommendations ‘should be viewed as a single comprehensive package, and should be implemented together. Treating them in isolation, or implementing only part of them, could be counter-productive and not generate the expected safety benefits.”

ECA welcomes suggestions to regularly evaluate the mental health of pilots with an identified history of such illness, as well as psychological evaluations before entering flight school, and a stronger emphasis on mental fitness throughout a pilot's career. For this, de-stigmatisation of mental health issues, as well as a trust relationship between the pilot and aero-medical examiner – based on confidentiality – are crucial to ensure pilots share mental fitness issues and seek help, rather than trying to hide them due to fear of losing their license, and hence their income and professional future.

ECA therefore strongly supports the BEA's clear recommendation to have airlines set up Peer Support Programmes (PSP) for their employees. Such programmes allow pilots to seek help on mental fitness and other personal issues, and for others, like their pilot colleagues and family members, to guide them towards professional assistance and to do so with the aim of bringing them back to the flight deck, where possible. Such programmes – which have worked well in many airlines – should become mandatory across Europe.

ECA also welcomes that the report clearly recognises the link between employees' “socio-economic risks” – in this case fear of losing the pilot license – and aviation safety. This interrelationship is growing rapidly in an industry that is subject to profound changes, such as new complex business set-ups and atypical forms of employment. The BEA report is yet another reminder that the ‘human’ factor – including employees' socio-economic risks – need to be more in the focus of the aviation industry and European Institutions.

ECA and the European airline pilot community are committed to continue working with all stakeholders to help implementing the BEA's safety recommendation successfully.