



2021

Annual Report

30 years ago, everything was better, right?

by Capt. Otjan de Bruijn, ECA President

Why do we like to say “everything used to be better”? Do we glorify the past because we feel powerless about the current situation? In this harsh time of the Corona crisis and its effect on aviation and our jobs, that may be partly justified, but the past wasn’t actually so much better.

In 1991 – the year of ECA’s creation – I was a very young pilot who was just employed by an exemplary European airline. I was promised upon admission that I would be allowed to fly on the most modern aircraft. I remember that on my first day of work I drove past the aviation museum which at that time was located at the airport and to my surprise I saw a beautiful Fokker F-27 “Friendship” on display, the same aircraft type for which I was trained. An icon from the 50s of the last century and a little less modern than I had hoped for. I was going to discover the world in a beautiful historic plane.

1991 was also the year of the 1st Gulf War, in which a coalition of forces went to war under a UN resolution to remove the Iraqi army from Kuwait. This relatively short war had a major negative

impact on European aviation with high financial consequences and many job losses. I have seen many young colleagues lose their jobs in that year and for many others, just out from flight school it meant an extra-long waiting time before the airlines dared to hire pilots again. A remarkable parallel with the current crisis 30 years later, which is many times greater in terms of numbers.

Aviation in Europe was at the beginning of a completely new phase in 1991. Until the 90s, most European countries had their own national legacy airline with their own aviation laws and regulations. In the wake of the Single European Act of 1986 and the completion of the internal market three separate sets of EU regulatory measures gradually turned the national aviation markets into a single market for air transport.

One of the consequences of this Single European aviation market was that control over many aviation regulations shifted from the individual Member States to the European Union. The direct result was that all individual pilot unions and associations lost their direct influence on a number of important themes such as the Flight Time Limitations, Flight Crew Licensing, Security, Economic regulation of air transport and certain social aspects. The only solution to this was to set up an umbrella organisation in the heart of the EU that would become the representative voice of Europe's airline pilots towards the EU Institutions. The European Cockpit Association was founded for this purpose in 1991, a special year!

The European approach to create a single market in European air travel, was deliberately phased in three stages to avoid the market disruption that was the US experience of the "Big Bang" approach

to liberalisation. This market disruption happened anyway but at a later stage because some airlines learned how to make use of the existing loopholes, which had not been anticipated and corrected in European aviation laws and regulations. In the past 30 years ECA had fought many battles for safer rules and regulations, for more fair and social aviation. As a consequence, there is a mark left by European pilots on all major regulations, without exception – from the Flight Time Limitations, to the EU Occurrence Reporting and Accident Investigation Regulations, or the EASA Basic regulation – to name but a few. It is therefore no surprise that our role and importance in the European aviation landscape is now firmly recognised – and counted upon.

But we all know what we are faced with – enormous business interests and a powerful airline and manufacturers' lobby that isn't always seeing the value of people. We can punch above our weight but we often face a mighty counter lobby.

At this time of crisis, and with the newly emerging challenges for social rights and aviation safety, our presence and work continues to be just as important, as it was in 1991. Authorities need an independent expert voice to help them in their work. Decision-makers need independent safety professionals to help them understand the dealings of the industry and its standards. Atypically employed crew need someone to give them a voice and fight for their rights. Regulators need a reality check about procedures and regulations. They also need to be critically challenged by someone. This is just a snapshot of all that we do. I can list at least 30 reasons why ECA and our work remains as relevant, and important, if not more, than 30 years ago.

The lack of a single labour law has created a detrimental effect on the employment conditions of many pilots in European aviation. It is unacceptable that there are airlines that have their registered office in country A, the aircraft are registered in country B, the pilots are stationed in country C and work as bogus self-employed for a temporary employment agency from country D. The only reason for this complex setup is to avoid social responsibilities and tax obligations.

ECA has fought many battles in the European arena over the past 3 decades and just by looking at the threats and developments for our profession and industry, some already flagged in this report, we are as necessary as before, desperately needed by Europe's pilot community, and ready for the next 30 years!

A SINGLE EUROPEAN MARKET

FOR AIR TRANSPORT:

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE



Report of a Joint Working Party set up by the British Airline Pilots Association and Vuelingcock Cockpit.

December 1989

The birth of ECA

By John P. Hill, 1989
The aim of this report is to provide a summary of the work of the Joint Working Party set up by the British Airline Pilots Association and Vuelingcock Cockpit.

The idea of forming the European Cockpit Association was first proposed by the British Airline Pilots Association and Vuelingcock Cockpit.

The main reason for the formation of the ECA was to provide a voice for pilots in Europe.

The ECA was formed in 1989 and has since then been working to improve the conditions of pilots in Europe.

The ECA has been successful in many of its campaigns and has won many battles for pilots in Europe.

The ECA continues to work hard to improve the conditions of pilots in Europe and will continue to do so in the future.

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Through the years



ECA Piloting
Safety
European Cockpit Association





Reduced crew operations take centre stage

2025 is the year envisaged by Airbus to have the first flights operating with reduced crew composition. The news about the project broke only in the past year, but the project itself has been under active development for a while. It would allow just one pilot at the controls for extended periods of the cruise phase while the other pilot would be resting, most likely in an area out of the flight deck. The project is just one example of the various developments aiming at reducing pilots onboard, driven partly by the expanding capabilities of automation and Artificial Intelligence but mostly by the industry's determination to slash pilot costs.

With this shaping to be the next most significant development for the pilot profession, ECA shifted up a gear over the past year and set up various workstreams.

First and foremost, we used every opportunity to take these developments out of the shadows and out in the open, where they can be discussed and scrutinized. Through media outreach and active communications on the subject, we tried to lift as much as possible the secrecy surrounding reduced crew projects and initiate debate with regulators and OEMs. It is not surprising that manufacturers and airlines would like to keep low profile as long as possible but in the past year the silence finally broke.

A major workstream at ECA concentrated on scrutinizing reduced crew operations in all their forms and from all perspectives. An ECA Task Force examined all aspects of eliminating or limiting human input in operating an aircraft. In spring 2021, we published a consolidated view on these developments, raising awareness on a number of safety and security risks that need to be carefully examined. One of the core messages is that automation on the flight deck has not reached a point of maturity enabling operations with only one pilot in the cockpit without compromising flight safety. For this reason, ECA currently does not support reduced or single pilot operations in CAT during any phase of flight.

The Position Paper also laid the foundation for calling upon the European regulator EASA to ensure a profound gap analysis. This is one of the main attention areas for ECA in the years to come – making sure EASA, as the regulator in charge, acts as a responsible safety watchdog rather than a facilitator of an ambitious, commercially driven industry agenda.

Parallel to that, ECA together with the German Pilots' Association VC, carried out a survey that provides a thorough view on the typically invisible or undetectable pilot actions or solutions to aviation problems emerging in daily operations. The starting point of the survey was that humans should be seen as a resource necessary for system flexibility and resilience. The preliminary results of the survey with more than 1400 contributions, demonstrate that pilots find creative solutions to an identified problem or malfunction and quite often have to make decisions based on incomplete information. The survey identifies various inappropriate Standard Operating Procedures and automatic system behavior, where pilots had to intervene. The survey also highlights various operational issues

where the crew had to act rapidly and creatively because a process did not work as intended (e.g. incomplete or outdated databases, passenger number discrepancies, inconsistent clearances, etc.).

In the meantime, ECA has been approached by various stakeholders to provide the professional pilots' view on multiple RCO-related projects, some with a focus on Human-centric AI applications (including AI Digital Assistants). We will continue to provide our input and expertise and advocate for safer solutions, independent from the industry's profit-driven agenda.



Commercial pressure from aircraft manufacturers and their customers must not play a role in the development of reduced crew operations.

Capt. Otjan de Bruijn, ECA President

Autonomous flights, eVTOL, Artificial Intelligence projects in aviation are exploding. Do you think the pilot community is sufficiently aware and understands the impact of these developments?

Paulina Marcickiewicz, ECA Technical Policy Advisor: Professional pilots are a very technology-aware and adaptative community. Their resilience is being tested in the operational reality every month. And so is their knowledge of the “here’s a new tool” – such as systems updates, procedures changes, or even further when moving on to a new aircraft type.

While they are used to such novelties flow – some of them might be overlooking the unprecedented pace of some of the overarching 21st century technology trends. That struck me especially when talking to a couple of young pilots, still in the initial training, who openly question the timelines shared by the developers. “It’s too distant, too complicated, too Sci-Fi” – they say. Is it? I think the best that pilot community can do is to remain well on the ball. Contribute to all relevant project streams and bring to the table the operational experience that could be missing in the discussions. Whether we can stop such a technology high-speed train full of money – is doubtful. But we can make sure it takes all the necessary stops and reaches a final, and not only intermediary, destination – called ‘Safety’.



First steps towards sustainability

The jury is still out on whether aviation is a big or small part of the problem called “climate change”. Yet, after pledging to offer solutions to this problem, in the past year, European Pilots took concrete steps by supporting several solid green initiatives.

In March, ECA joined a coalition of aviation and environmental organizations calling for a ramp-up of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs). Pilots asked for a future-proof framework which would set Europe on the right path to emission reduction. SAFs have the potential to significantly cut airlines’ carbon emissions if the production of these innovative fuels is also done in a sustainable way.

A Consensus Statement, uniting leading environmental groups, airlines and aviation stakeholders (incl. ECA), built a coalition of likeminded, urging decision-makers to create a sustainable, future-proof framework for SAFs in Europe. This Consensus Statement was presented and further discussed at a webinar, co-organised by ECA in May. Subsequently, ECA co-signed a letter to 3 EU Commissioners asking for more ambitious e-kerosene mandates and re-iterating the need of aviation among the different transport modes to get a timely access to the right volume of alternative fuels.



ECA Vice President Juan Carlos Lozano
@ (RE)Fuelling Flight Webinar

In September, ECA joined forces with the European SAF Industrial Alliance (ESAF), a group of over 30 organisations, working towards ensuring timely and adequate development and production of SAFs. Such a SAF-specific alliance would be a key instrument for Europe and pilots' participation is of significance. ECA has been vocally urging the European Commission to give its full political back-up to ESAF and to take all measures within its remit to support and ease the setting-up of such an initiative.

How do you assess the chances of success for the Fit for 55 package? Would it go through?

Loïc Michel, ECA Policy Advisor: No doubt that FF55 will be the single most important dossier on the table of EU policymakers for the next 2-3 years in the context of a 'make-or-break decade' regarding the fight against climate change.

What is at stake for European economies and societies with FF55 is huge, ranging from transport to agriculture and energy, and we can therefore expect a big political fight with the active involvement of many players and stakeholders, including NGOs and the civil society.


The Western-Eastern Europe split may also play a significant role. The fierce resistance of some Member States, especially Poland, when the Climate Law was debated among the heads of States and governments, created major political tensions before a compromise was finally found. A very strong plea was made by some governments to get the flexibility to choose the path of transition that will enable the Member States to achieve shared objectives. This certainly gives a taste of the major challenge coming with FF55 discussions.

What happens if Europe fails to address environmental concerns?

Kristína Gírethová, ECAPolicy Advisor: The recently published IPPC report was yet another confirmation that “global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless strong reductions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades”. The consequences for our living on the planet Earth are very clear and the dangerous impact of human-caused climate disruption well-established.

There is also a critical geostrategic dimension for Europe and a crucial economic aspect. Legislating for climate-neutrality is also meant to send a global signal that the EU is serious about its climate leadership claims. Should this fail or FF55 have a much lower ambition at the end of the day the credibility of the continent as a whole would be severely harmed and Europe’s influence on the world stage further decreased.

Failing in the FF55 undertaking would also mean to give-up a crucial competitive advantage when it comes to international trade and future economic development.



Despite the COVID crisis, the European Commission has remained committed to the EU Green Deal.

The European Climate Law which sets 55% reduction targets by 2030 and the ambition to reach net zero by 2050 was adopted in April. And in July 2021, the Commission set concrete legislative steps to achieve the 2030 and 2050 goals under the umbrella of the-so-called Fit for 55 Package.

110.000

f **11.300 FANS**

 **540 Mentions**

in **3144 Followers**

For aviation, it's 11th hour to tackle social issues

A whole generation of pilots in Europe knows nothing else than precarity and atypical employment. The post-COVID job market offers no brighter prospects, with all airlines reluctant to invest in directly employed crews. Instead, they resort to atypical employment offers as a way of securing enough workforce in case of a ramp-up but offloading the risk and costs to the desperate, unemployed crew.

This practice continues to gain ground – and this is why for years ECA has invested considerable time & effort in convincing decision-makers that precarious contracts have no place in aviation. In the past year, one thing became clear – our message has resonated with Transport Ministers across Europe's capitals and the European Parliament. But there continues to be stubbornly little ambition within the European Commission to address social issues in aviation.

In an effort to move the European Commission, several Transport Ministers from across Europe signed a Joint Declaration, highlighting the problems of atypical employment, legal uncertainty, and an uneven playing field for air carriers.

Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal joined forces for this initiative. Shortly after, they were joined by two further Transport Ministers – from Spain and Norway. While the Joint Declaration showed that Europe's capitals are alert, display ambition and determination, the European Commission is quietly stalling progress by postponing the revision of a key regulation – the EU Air Services Regulation 1008/2008. While

it was foreseen for this to happen already in 2020, before COVID hit, the EU Commission keeps pushing back the timeline.

In the past year, ECA continued to advocate for a swift revision of this Regulation as it is seen by legal experts as the most effective tool to address many social and employment issues that hamper the correct functioning of the Single European aviation market. Our strategy has identified four key areas where improvements are necessary: operational bases, direct employment of crews, wet leasing and enforcement.

Despite the lack of active leadership from the EU Commission, the Revision of Reg. 1008/2008 is clearly on the radar also of the European Parliament. Two Oral Questions were asked to the European Commission by the Transport and the Employment Committees. In the July EU Parliament plenary session, the European Commissioner for Transport Ms. Vălean and the Commissioner for Employment Mr. Schmit had to elaborate on their plans to tackle social issues in aviation – fueled by numerous statements from EU Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum.

One question sounded loud and clear from Members of the EU Parliament: When will the Commission finally put forward a revision of the EU Air Services Regulation in order to ensure decent working and employment conditions in the aviation sector?

In parallel, the European Expert Group on 'Social matters related to aircrew' – bringing national aviation and labour authorities together worked on two key issues relevant for aircrew: (bogus) self-employment and the important question of which social & labour law applies to the highly mobile aircrew. On the latter, the Expert Group issued a recommendation to the EU Commission to clearly define the concepts of home base and operational base. ECA's contributions to the debate in this group played a key role to align and unite all EU Member States' representatives to unanimously condemn bogus self-employment.

EU Parliament Hearing



"It is feared that the difficulties that the airline sector is facing could lead to more job cuts and further downgrading of terms and conditions."

Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, MEP



"European pilots and crew have been the victim of bogus self-employment and social dumping for years"

Clare Daly, MEP



"It is essential to take the social dimension into account during the next revision of Regulation No 1008/2008. We are waiting for firm action."

Sylvie Brunet, MEP

If there is one thing that the European Commission did next year for aviation, what would that be?

Philip von Schöppenthau, ECA Secretary General: Strong EU Commission leadership to put social sustainability at the center of the COVID exit strategy for aviation. 'Building back better' after the crisis must mean to stop the rampant use of exploitative atypical air crew employment forms – be it bogus self-employment, broker agency set-ups, or zero-hour contracts. They are bad for social standards, bad for fair competition in Europe and bad for aviation safety.

To tackle them, ECA has been pushing hard for EU legislation that adds a meaningful social dimension to Europe's Single Aviation Market – something for which we managed to get the support from 10 national Transport Ministers as well as the EU Parliament. They all want the Commission to act – and to act quickly.

A winning streak

A series of legal victories for pilots in 2021 has brought hope that more and more pilots are aware of their rights and are not afraid to pursue them in Court. While this is in no way a representative overview, or an ECA achievement, many of our Member Associations have worked either with the crew involved or supported them vocally along the way. Here are some of the milestone cases.

Pilots vs Wizz Air

Wizz Air has been forced to reinstate four pilots and ten cabin crew based in Romania after firing them in April 2020. The Court deems the terminations unlawful. Similar Court cases are ongoing in other jurisdictions. In one of the verdicts, the Bucharest Tribunal notes that the dismissal was not based on real and serious reasons, because the airline failed to prove that it had major financial difficulties. Among other things, the court points out that Wizz Air hired nine new pilots after the dismissal for the same position that was abolished two and a half months earlier.

Pilots vs Bluebird

Blue Bird, a rapidly growing Icelandic airline laid off all its pilots who were union members, only weeks after having hired a comparable number of bogus self-employed contractors, ready to replace the union pilots. The Icelandic pilots' association argued this is illegal and won the case in Labour court.



Ryanair @ Canary base

In March, Ryanair was ordered to reinstate and fully compensate workers unfairly dismissed from Canary Islands base. The National Court has justified the ruling in the existence of “employer bad faith”.

Cabin crew vs. Ryanair

The four dismissed Ryanair cabin crew, who rightfully refused to fly fatigued and exceeding the maximum working hours, should be either reinstated or compensated, says a Spanish Court. The judges do not see any indication of misconduct or disobedience by the crew. The case made headlines in 2018 as a flagrant example of pressure to use ‘Commander’s Discretion’ to extend legal flight time limits – a practice that can put safety margins under significant strain, if it is motivated by commercial considerations.

The best for last: The Mons case

After 10 long years, in 2021, the Belgian Court issued its final ruling on the Mons case. The case concerned several former Ryanair crew members and went to the EU Court of Justice to decide which labour/social law jurisdiction should apply to them. This Court case concerns facts that happened over 10 years ago – between April and June 2011. The outcome is that local labour law is applicable to aircrew in the country they are based, instead of other criteria like the nature of the employment contract.

We've had a number of high-profile Court case judgments in favour of aircrew against Ryanair, Wizzair, Bluebird... Is this a good sign?

Ignacio Plaza, ECA Deputy Secretary General: Yes, definitely! We can now say that there is a structural trend in case law regarding claims of bogus self-employment. In most of the cases, the user company – meaning the airline – is furthermore designated as the real employer.

However, Court cases alone are not the solution. For more than 15 years, those practices have caused irreparable damage to labour standards and to fair competition in the internal market. Unfortunately, the penalties that the condemned airlines will have to pay are ridiculously low compared to their illicit gains. In social affairs, cheating is profitable and pays off, while justice is simply not dissuasive.

The EU and national authorities must therefore see the signs sent by the Courts and act by proposing effective EU-wide legislation.

Airline Social Rankings are in. And the winner is...

Over 6000 pilots ranked over 120 airlines in the most comprehensive effort so far to identify the best European airlines to work for.

Created and promoted by ECA, the Social Rating survey ran from July to September and asked pilots to look at criteria like the use of atypical employment forms in their airlines, contractual arrangements, union relations, collective bargaining and work-life balance. The intention was to take stock of pilot satisfaction in Europe's cockpits and get an idea of how much of an attractive and social employers airlines are.

The results show a varying landscape. While some airlines achieved almost a maximum score of 'Social Excellence', others are barely reaching the minimum for the 'Social Junk' category.

A third of all airlines achieve the rating of '**Social Excellence**'. Those are airlines which treat their employees like a family and keep them proud and engaged. Air France tops the list of the Social Excellence, with Condor, Wideroe, KLM, Lufthansa and almost 40 others in this top category.

One step behind the Social Excellence are the '**Social Partner**' airlines which still score high on

SOCIAL RATING BY PILOTS

Click on an airline to dig deeper into its score

Surfignor Airline



	Air France	98
	Martinair	97
	Condor Flugdienst	97
	Wideroe	97
	Novair	97
	Lufthansa CityLine	96
	Norwegian Air Ambulance	96
	Chr. Helikopter Service	96
	KLM	96
	DEA Aviation	95
	Air Dolomiti	95
	Transavia	94
	Icelandair	93
	Austrian Airlines	93
	SATA/Azores Airlines	93
	Great Dane Airlines	92
	Jettime	92
	Edelweiss Air	91
	Nordic Regional Airlines	91
	Sundt Air	91
	Fly AS	90
	Vueling	88
	Aer Lingus	88
	HOP!	88
	LEVEL	88
	Luxair	87
	SWISS	87
	Cargolux Airlines International	87

Rated by pilots:
European
Airlines'
Social Rating



THE SCALE

European Airlines' Social Rating

☆ 0 👁 770

almost all aspects but where pilots see some room for improvement. Those airlines include: ASL airlines, Brussels Airlines, Croatia Airlines, Jet2, SAS, TAP and others.

The 3rd category – **'Social Snail'** – captures airlines which gravitate between the world of Social Partner and Social Junk. They are doing well on some aspects but underperform (sometimes strongly) on others. Key players in this category are e.g. Turkish Airlines, Malta Air, Volotea and Aegean airlines.

In the 4th category, the **'Social Misfits'**, we find prominent European low-cost players – Ryanair, Buzz, Lauda, Wizz. Those airlines score low on almost all aspects and pilots indicate little appreciation or satisfaction with these employers.

The lowest scoring airlines, the **'Social Junk'**, are unsurprisingly smaller players that often fly below the radar of authorities, such as Aviation Express and SmartLynx.

This survey comes at a time when ECA is fighting for the pilots' need for adequate social legislation in aviation at the EU-level. Disappointingly, the European Commission has announced a further delay of the revision of the EU Air Services Regulation 1008/2008 which represents the biggest opportunity to implement such legislation!

The data compiled will therefore serve as a useful tool not only for pilots looking for new jobs, but also tie in with ECA's campaign for a socially sustainable aviation. It will provide data for the European pilot community and valuable feed-back for the airlines. Furthermore, it will raise the awareness of all interested parties, including the travelling public and national & European policy-makers.

Flight Time Limitations under COVID

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 in 2020, EASA adopted Guidelines for Temporary Flight Time Limitations (FTL) Exemptions to accommodate airlines' needs in the extraordinary circumstances. Not only had ECA successfully managed to shape the Guidelines in 2020 with focus on safety, but throughout 2021 we have actively stayed in contact with EASA to communicate about the Guidelines' implementation and their practical implications for crews.

In March, ECA FTL expert Capt. Didier Moraine participated in the EASA webinar on fatigue in cargo operations during COVID-19. Didier's presentation at the webinar highlighted the importance of well-developed Fatigue Risk Management (FRM)/Safety Management System (SMS) tools for operators – including a well-functioning Fatigue Safety Action Group (FSAG) – to make it through critical situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, both from a commercial and a fatigue management point of view.

Within the EASA FTL/FRM subgroup of the Flight Standards Technical forum, ECA brought up the issue of inadequate standards and room confinement during layovers in China and Thailand. On top of that, the local ground handling restrictions may have further negative repercussions for European operators and their crews alike. ECA will continue collecting evidence on this matter and share it with the Agency.

Despite the initial freezing of the EASA actions on urgently needed FTL rule changes due to the COVID-19 crisis, in 2021 EASA came up with some hard and soft law changes proposals. Jointly with ETF, we swiftly reacted to these proposals. While we appreciated the suggested applicability of FRM for all night duties, we expressed concerns about the absence of provisions for disruptive schedules (early starts & late finishes). ECA's engagement with EASA on this important topic is work in progress.

Finally, ECA's involvement in the preparation of the IFALPA FRMS Training course has continued in 2021. ECA was able to run a test webinar on 7 June during which some modules of the course were presented. The webinar was a sneak preview of the upcoming 2-day course planned for 2022.

CARGO OPS

With a steady demand throughout the past two years, cargo aviation has offered a safe refuge and job stability to many pilots in Europe. ECA expert and MD-11 pilot Felix Gottwald & B737 pilot Guillaume Demumieux talked to AeroTime about the perks and the challenges of being a cargo pilot.



New rising star on the TNA Horizon

Wizz Air expands aggressively. While the majority of airlines were reducing capacity due to the COVID crisis, Wizz Air expanded in Western Europe with new bases and routes. But Western Europe's stricter employment legislation and industrial relations culture are going to test the airline's ability to adapt. On top, the leaked internal recording of Wizz about the highly questionable redundancy criteria for pilots and cabin crew, and several court cases fighting those redundancies, are putting the airline in the spotlight of authorities and media.

To follow up on these developments and support pilots, ECA set up a Wizz Air Task Force to exchange information on terms and conditions. As well as being a platform for such exchanges, the task force will seek to determine the unionisation potential among pilots and establish strategies for raising awareness about Wizz Air practices towards national and EU decision-makers.

With a series of articles and social media posts throughout the year, we put Wizz Air's practices under scrutiny and in the spotlight. This comes in addition to active outreach to EASA as a relevant authority overseeing Wizz as the first EASA AOC holder. ECA sent several letters requesting the Agency to look into the corporate safety culture at the airline. The letters included pilot testimonies, which re-confirm the safety concerns as well as the need for targeted & effective action by national and European authorities – especially on the issue of airlines' corporate safety culture.

In the past year, we've seen Wizz Air pilots becoming more outspoken about certain practices in the company, Court cases over unlawful redundancies as well as a leaked internal recording that paints a very worrying picture. At the same time, Wizz Air is expanding in Western Europe and facing more and more scrutiny. Can we call 2021 the year of the Wizz Air pilots awakening? What's next for them?

Can we call 2021 the year of the Wizz Air pilots awakening?

What's next for them?

Sarah Kamer, ECA Policy Advisor: It's definitely been the year of them seizing the momentum to speak up. A combination of frustrations with how the company has treated crew during the pandemic, combined with public and media scrutiny has provided them with a center stage.

At ECA we have supported their voice and helped raise awareness about practices at Wizz Air towards the public and decision-makers. But we're still lacking a key element for getting Wizz Air pilots' concerns and demands addressed: union recognition.



With the changing aircraft generations, and the evolution from early jets to the fly by wire technology, the automation on the flight deck has evolved over the years. It has however still not reached a point of maturity enabling operations with only one pilot in the cockpit without compromising flight safety. **This paper highlights serious flight safety concerns by Europe's pilot community about reduced and single pilot operations.**



Due to the dynamic political situation across the world, conflict zones persist and change, sometimes suddenly and/or unpredictably, exposing civil aviation and the layover of flight crews to the risk of collateral damage or targeted attack. Recent disasters show that **the existing measures to avoid flights in and over conflict zones are not sufficient to adequately protect civil aviation.**



Cyber-attacks occur and are increasing. Depending on attacker profile, the goal of these attacks can range from simple system reconnaissance or confidential data leakage to sensitive information tampering, or even to full system takeover and/or destruction.

Facing such a constantly evolving threat, the aviation sector cannot claim to be cyber secure, it should develop and maintain cyber resilience instead.




This paper outlines the European pilots' perspective and position on Remote Towers. **ECA accepts the development of Remote Tower Services (RTS)**, provided that the flight safety, service and quality level is met or increased, compared to conventional tower services.

Data protection law and the exercise of collective labour rights

How can workers' representatives challenge employers who decline to provide information on the grounds of the 'General Data Protection Regulation', known as the GDPR? [A new study](#), commissioned by ECA, carried out by KULeuven, and funded by the EU Commission, brings GDPR in connection with collective labour rights and industrial relations, mainly from the view of the right to information and consultation as well as the right to collective bargaining. The study is a first step of a more far-reaching project which foresees the development of a code of conduct.

2021: the year of security culture

20 years after the 9/11 attacks, aviation security is again in the spotlight. This time, however, it is due to ICAO's Year of Security Culture initiative. On the occasion, ECA Security Working Group Vice-Chair Capt. Michael Petry reflected on the nature of security threats and reminded of the importance of the various security procedures in place and the need for their prudent execution. ICAO welcomed Michael's article and promoted it globally via its YOSC website.

An aerial view of an airplane wing, showing the leading edge and the wing's structure, set against a vibrant sunset sky with orange and yellow hues. The wing is dark blue and black, with a yellow light strip along the leading edge. The background is a vast expanse of blue and white clouds.

“Our job as crew is to make sure we do not display any vulnerability to whoever is observing us during the flight.”

Capt. Michael Petry,

ECA Security Working Group Vice-Chair

Pilots support global efforts against Runway Excursions

Runway excursions are a persistent problem and their numbers have not decreased in more than 20 years. This is why ECA experts have been actively involved in the review of the European Action Plan for the Prevention of Runway Excursions (EAPPRE), which was republished as a Global Action Plan (GAPPRE) in January 2021.

While pilots cannot directly influence how airlines will make use of the recommendations, ECA experts filtered out universally valid best practices from the GAPPRE, and put together guidance material dedicated specifically to flight crew.

RAES Rotorcraft Forum

Ergonomics in helicopter design: The design of the flight deck and systems can influence the crew performance. Long-term expert from the VNV, Captain Edwin Tasma, addressed the subject at the Royal Aeronautical Society's 47th European Rotorcraft Forum.

The highly stressful and fatiguing environment in which helicopter pilots operate, with high noise levels and vibrations, justifies further improvements in the design of helicopter cockpits and seats.



Tanja Harter at EASA 360° Conference



EASA 360° Conference

This year's EASA 360° Conference included an impressive line-up of ECA pilot expert speakers. ECA Technical Board Director Tanja Harter discussed the operational challenges for pilots in the panel 'New Safety Landscape'. Bert Bonke, ECA Flight Data Working Group Chair, shed light on Data4Safety's first operational steps and provided a 360° view on 'Approach Path Management'. Felix Gottwald (VC) discussed 'Safe use of airspace'. And Rudy Pont (BeCA) contributed to the 360° Workshop on monitoring of the COVID-19 Safety Issues with FDM.

CAT Webinar Series by Halldale Group

ECA Technical Affairs Board Director Tanja Harter participated in the CAT Webinar Series on the impact of Covid-19 on pilot skill decay, impact assessment, corresponding regulatory guidance, key insights and recommendations.

Just Culture Webinars Series feat. ECA Rudy Pont



ECA President Otjan de Bruijn, Aviation Day



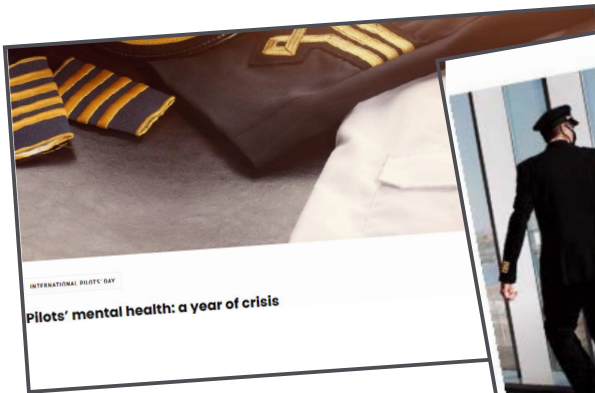
Aviation Day

ECA President Otjan de Bruijn participated on the panel on recovery of the aviation sector during & after the COVID pandemic at the Aviation Day Conference under the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. His speech focused on the social aspects & impact of the pandemic on workers' employment.

Just Culture Webinars Series feat. ECA Rudy Pont

Just culture remains one of the building blocks of aviation safety and in the past year, our experts continued promoting it. In Nov. 2020, ECA's Rudy Pont participated in the EUROCONTROL Just Culture webinar and articulated ECA's support to the Just Culture Manifesto, a statement that articulates a vision of just culture that connects with people from all industrial sectors, around the world.

In addition, ECA continued to participate in other ongoing existing initiatives, such as the Eurocontrol Prosecutor Expert Course, training experts to help prosecutors understand the details of aviation occurrences so they can make a well-informed decision whether a judicial investigation or criminal prosecution is necessary or not.



INTERNATIONAL PILOTS DAY

Pilots' mental health: a year of crisis



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

From Pilot to Truck Driver—Airline Careers Grounded by Pandemic

The aviation industry's most prestigious and lucrative career path is no longer a sure thing

Aviation

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Pilots endorse EASA's Airworthiness Directive on Boeing 737 MAX

By André Oelen — 27 January 2021

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) is clearing the Boeing 737 MAX to fly after nearly 2-year grounding. The **Airworthiness Directive** issued today concludes a meaningful and thorough Boeing 737 MAX Return To Service (RTS) process. While trust and confidence were severely undermined at the start of the process, the involvement of other parties – such as EASA and pilot unions – as well as the increased scrutiny from EU decision-makers have resulted in a transparent and reassuring process.

"The reasons that led to the grounding of the Boeing 737 MAX were a clear example of commercial pressure overriding safety considerations in the aviation industry. It was therefore crucial that EASA's work in this regard has been thorough – and it is encouraging to see the reliability in a regulator that EASA has shown. The MAX debacle is certainly a valuable reminder about the importance of early safety warning signs and the precautionary approach, just as

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[Ryanair aims to hire 2,000 pilots over next three years, Financial Times](#)

[European Regulators, Industry Take On Pilot Fatigue Issues, Aviation International News](#)

[From Pilot to Truck Driver—Airline Careers Grounded by Pandemic, Wall Street Journal](#)

In the media

What else?

ECA experts have actively contributed to several SKYclips over the last 12 months, such as a SKYclip to illustrate the risk of late RWY/approach changes supporting the implementation of some recommendations from the Global Action Plan for the Prevention of Runway Excursions.

The COVID crisis is still very much ongoing. We continue to raise awareness about the problems that pilots are facing as a consequence – be it the [high unemployment rate](#) among them, the [deteriorating employment conditions](#) across all industry segments, the challenges of [mandatory vaccinations](#) or the [skills decay](#) as a consequence of the long time on the ground.

The demise of Norwegian: [From Cost Control to Lost Control](#): comprehensive fact filled article on Norwegian's complicated existence

ASL pilots come together and lead the way in the first steps towards establishing a European Works Council.

About ECA

The European Cockpit Association (ECA) was created in 1991

and is the representative body of European pilots at EU level. We

represent over 40,000 European pilots from 36 national pilots'

associations.



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