Svensk Pilotförening

European Cockpit Association
'Piloting Safety'

PRESS RELEASE

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Aviation Safety:
Throwing Away Existing Knowledge on Fatigue Would Be a "Stupidity" Says Scientific Fatigue Symposium in Stockholm

Scientists from all over the world show concurrent results from experiments on the effects of fatigue and sleepiness. The scientists challenged critics to demonstrate that fatigue does not have an impact on the performance of individuals. They showed reports pointing to fatigue as a factor in 20 to 30% of overall aviation accidents.

"Fatigue in the Air and on the Road" – the aim of this Symposium organised by the Stress Research Institute of Stockholm University, on 11 May, was to *"summarize the state of the art with respect to fatigue impact on drivers and aircrew."* It was attended by 170 participants from authorities, universities, airlines, pilot and cabin crew representatives from across the globe.

Based on a wide body of scientific research, the scientists explained the physiological processes that lead to fatigue and described – based on simulator and real condition experiments – the key factors determining pilot fatigue: e.g. time awake, time of the start of work duty, length of the duty, length of rest, etc.

The recent scientific evaluation of the EU's Flight and Duty Time legislation (= pilot fatigue rules) – and the identified need to change this legislation – was also addressed. Experts from QinetiQ, a UK research institute, explained the evidence that substantiates the findings and recommendations included in this report, concluding that existing scientific knowledge is sufficient to draw a number of sound conclusions. Further research on the same issues would cost considerable amounts of money to eventually lead to the same results. The scientists believe the report is a solid basis for changing EU fatigue rules; research should focus now in the development of Fatigue Risk Management Systems (FRMS) which would complement the EU's fatigue legislation in the near future.

FRMS and the models they are based upon are seen as the way forward. However, in order to be effective and to ensure no new safety loop-holes are created, these models should strictly follow ICAO recommendations. Accordingly, FRMS and their models should:

- be certified as to their ability to identify and manage fatigue-related risks;
- operate in a fully transparent way, disclosing not only the detailed data but also the theory and methodology used ;
- undergo strong quality control systems organised by both the regulator and the operator.

The European Cockpit Association and its member the Swedish Airline Pilots Association (SPF) fully endorse a science-based approach to fatigue legislation and fatigue management, both at regulatory and company level. We urge EASA and the European Institutions to swiftly include the existing scientific evidence in European Flight and Duty Time Regulations.

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