

10PRL01

IFALPA Dismayed by Tuninter sentences

Auckland 25 March: The delegates to the 64th Conference of the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) unanimously voiced their dismay when informed that once again the compulsion to apportion blame has outweighed the greater need to improve the safety of air transport. In Palermo yesterday sentences, totaling 62 years, were handed down against the flight crew and management of Tuninter in connection with the August 2005 ditching of an ATR72 off the coast of Sicily.

The technical investigation into the circumstances leading to the crash revealed that it happened because an incorrect fuel gauge sensor was fitted to the aircraft which, in turn, led to a double engine failure due to fuel exhaustion. The flight crew reacted to the loss of power in a textbook fashion and completed a successful ditching at sea. Under the internationally accepted approach to accident investigation such circumstances would not be grounds for a criminal prosecution.

IFALPA strongly believes that this prosecution was totally unwarranted given the facts of the accident and furthermore once again calls into question its commitment to the improvement of air safety. Italy has been criticized in the past for its stance on accident related prosecutions and this case provides another example of this policy.

IFALPA calls on the Italian Government to act now to amend the laws which continue to have a detrimental effect on air safety and in doing so improve the safety of the travelling public.

Notes to Editors

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 100 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. See the Federation website www.ifalpa.org

For more information contact Gideon Ewers, IFALPA Media Communications Officer +44 1932 579041 or on gideonewers@ifalpa.org