

Falling Behind

European nations are falling behind in efforts to upgrade the continent's "notoriously inefficient" air traffic management, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) says.

IATA said the problem has affected commitments to improving operational, financial and environmental efficiency.

"Airlines have invested in aircraft and technology to operate at the highest levels of efficiency, oftentimes ahead of what ANSPs [air navigation services providers] are capable of," said IATA Director General and CEO Tony Tyler. "It is the responsibility of the states to ensure that their air navigation service providers are delivering what is needed."

IATA cited a report by the Single European Sky Performance Review Body that said 21 of 29 European countries had not made adequate contributions and projected that the shortfall would "equat[e] to a total cost of €256 million of unrealized savings for 2012–2014."

Information Hunt

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has asked Pinnacle Airlines, the parent company of Colgan Air, to turn over "any and all information regarding the training and technical qualifications of the captain and first officer" who were flying a Bombardier Q400 that crashed in 2009.

All 49 people in the airplane and one person on the ground were killed when the airplane struck a house during a Feb. 12 nighttime approach. The airplane was destroyed.

The NTSB said the probable cause of the crash was the captain's inappropriate response to activation of the stick shaker, which led to an unrecoverable stall and the subsequent crash.

NTSB Chairman Deborah A.P. Hersman said the NTSB was disappointed when it learned in October that Pinnacle Airlines had not given investigators internal documents that included criticism of the accident pilot's flying skills. Published reports said that the documents included emails sent by company managers questioning the captain's skills. The papers were made public in connection with wrongful death lawsuits filed by victims' families.

Hersman said that, although the documents apparently were consistent with investigators' findings, "it is critical that the factual record of this accident be complete."

Testing Endorsements

Companies that provide proficiency tests in aviation English may now apply to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for an endorsement, ICAO says.

ICAO's endorsement will apply to the test — not the test provider.

"In response to fatal accidents in which the lack of proficiency in English was identified as a contributing factor, ICAO adopted standards to strengthen language proficiency for pilots and air traffic controllers involved in international operations," said Nancy Graham, director of the ICAO Air Navigation Bureau.

She said the ICAO endorsement "makes it easier to achieve that objective by providing states with impartial recommendations on selecting or developing English language tests that comply with our standards."

ICAO said an endorsement remains in effect for three years.

ICAO developed the endorsement service in partnership with several international professional organizations — the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations, the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations, the International Language Testing Association and the International Civil Aviation English Association.



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EU–Russian Summit

Officials from the European Union (EU) and Russia say their first aviation summit, held in October in St. Petersburg, Russia, provided a "solid platform" for discussions aimed at building international cooperation in civil aviation.

European Commission Vice President Siim Kallas said the summit marked "a turning point in our aviation relations with Russia, which for too long have not been exploited to their full potential."

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the EU — established in 1989 to foster cooperation in economic, scientific and technical efforts and in other areas of mutual interest — said the summit was crucial not only in discussions of civil aviation issues but also in establishing business contacts among members of the aviation community.

The EU is Russia's largest international aviation market, with more than 40 percent of Russian passenger traffic destined for airports in the EU. Russia "has the potential to become [the EU's] second-most important air transport market after the United States," the European Commission said.

Controller Scheduling Cited

Air traffic control (ATC) scheduling practices were partly to blame for an incident in which pilots of three aircraft were unable to contact the lone controller working the midnight shift at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) says.

In its final report on the March 23, 2011, incident, the NTSB said that the probable causes were the controller’s “loss of consciousness induced by lack of sleep, fatigue resulting from working successive midnight shifts and air traffic control scheduling practices.”

The report described the incident — between about 0004 and 0028 local time — as a “service interruption.”

During the 24-minute period, pilots of two air carrier aircraft and a helicopter, the operator of an airport

operations vehicle and air traffic controllers at the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration Potomac Terminal Radar Approach Control facility were unable to establish contact with the controller. Pilots of the two airliners landed without contacting the tower, although they had discussed the situation with approach controllers.

“Post-incident investigation revealed that the controller on duty had the necessary preconditions for the development of fatigue at the time of the event, specifically acute sleep loss in the 24 hours before the event and circadian disruption as a result of working the midnight shift,” the report said.

The controller, a 20-year ATC veteran who had become a supervisor in 2005, told investigators that he was “beat, worn out,” and that being that tired was not unusual for the fourth midnight shift of the week. He moved around and stretched in an effort to remain alert. Just before the incident, he issued a clearance and noted that three airplanes were inbound to the airport; after that, he “did not recall anything else clearly until waking up,” the report said.

He told investigators that his awareness returned when he heard one of the airline pilots calling the tower in a “forceful voice,” and he realized only later that he had been asleep. He said that he finished his shift, with “adrenaline ... pumping” after the incident, and then reviewed what had happened with ATC managers.

He said he was “professionally embarrassed, shocked, panicked, ashamed” and that he had not realized until he reviewed tower recordings that pilots of two aircraft had landed without being able to contact him.

A physician found no indication of any medical issue that might have contributed to the event but said the controller’s sleep patterns during the five previous days “may have played a role.”

As a result of the incident, ATC managers implemented a number of changes, including scheduling a second controller on the midnight shift and ensuring that operational personnel are scheduled for nine hours off after working the midnight shift.

In addition, the airlines involved added information to their company manuals for pilots describing alternate means of communication in case of a radio communication failure.

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Proposed Penalties

Pinnacle Airlines is facing \$1 million in proposed civil penalties for allegedly operating two airplanes on a total of 63 flights while the airplanes were out of compliance with U.S. Federal Aviation Regulations.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which proposed the penalties, said that Pinnacle operated a Canadair Regional Jet on 23 flights between April 30 and May 4, 2009, after flight crewmembers performed a task that was required to be performed by maintenance personnel. The task involved installation and removal of a cable kit — required for an aircraft with an inoperative or missing wheel assembly for the passenger door.

The FAA also said that the airline did not complete inspections designed to identify and track the growth of a crack on the low-pressure turbine case on a Canadair Regional Jet. The



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airplane was operated on 40 passenger flights between Aug. 25 and Aug. 31, 2010, when it was not in compliance, the FAA said.

The airline has 30 days from the date it received the FAA’s enforcement letters to respond.

Lighting Awareness

Pilots and operators of airport motor vehicles should be given more information about runway status lights (RWSLs) — automated systems being installed at 23 U.S. airports to prevent serious runway incursions, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) says.

FAA Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) 11009, issued in October, says anyone who taxis an aircraft or operates a motor vehicle within an airport movement area at those airports should be aware of the location and meaning of RWSLs, which provide a visual signal that tells pilots or drivers when it is unsafe to enter or cross a runway or to begin or continue a takeoff.

RWSLs should be discussed during training events and training programs to improve recognition of RWSL signals and knowledge of related procedures, the SAFO says.

“Installation of RWSLs at some of the nation’s busiest and most complex airports will increase crew situational awareness on the airport surface and aid in reducing



U.S. Federal Aviation Administration

incidences of serious runway incursions,” the document says.

RWSLs are red in-pavement lights that illuminate to indicate a potentially unsafe situation, indicated by information provided by ASDE-X (airport surface detection equipment, Model X) on vehicle and aircraft locations.

The first RWSL system was installed in May 2011 at Orlando (Florida) International Airport; 22 other airports are scheduled to receive the equipment by the end of 2016.

Training Airport Fire Fighters

The AviAssist Foundation has completed a five-day aircraft rescue and fire fighting (ARFF) training session at Kilimanjaro International Airport in Tanzania.

The session was scheduled partially in response to audits by the International Civil Aviation Organization that found that recurrent ARFF training occurs less often than required for airport personnel in Africa and that live fire drills also are infrequent, said AviAssist, the Eastern and Southern Africa regional affiliate of Flight Safety Foundation.

Training sessions, conducted in partnership with Groningen Airport Eelde in the Netherlands, emphasized nighttime fire fighting and the use of breathing equipment, along with other subjects, and included live-fire exercises, AviAssist Director Tom Kok said.

“The training directly improved the emergency preparedness of the participating airports,” Kok said. “We are keen to continue our contribution to training more professionals that are close to the hazards.”

The ARFF training sessions are expected to become annual events, Kok said.

In Other News ...

Flight Safety Foundation President and CEO **William R. Voss** has been honored by the International Air and Safety Bar Association for “fostering air safety and data sharing through the decriminalization of aircraft accidents.” The association honored Voss with the third annual Joseph T. Nall Award for “significant contributions to aviation and transportation safety.” ... The Australian Civil Aviation Safety Authority has established an **electronic flight bag (EFB)** project to coordinate development of standards, rules and guidance materials for the use of EFBs. ... The **Agency for Air Navigation Security in Africa and Madagascar** has contracted with Thales to modernize air traffic control centers in six countries — Chad, Congo, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Niger and Senegal. The updated centers will rely on a multi-sensor tracking system to integrate radars and satellite-based surveillance systems.



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