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Press Release

Safety Warning by Aircraft Engineers International overwhelmingly ignored by European National Aviation Authorities.

The Safety Warning AEI published after our congress in London September 2007 http://www.airengineers.org/docs/Annual_congress/2007/aei_press_release_after_congress_full_version..pdf and sent to all the European Aviation Authorities, has received little response, let alone support or acknowledgement from these authorities. Although the Safety Warning was clear and precise and specifically informed the authorities where this evidence could easily be found, AEI is of the opinion that no Authority is willing to investigate and / or report any findings to AEI. The Authorities more or less stated that their system of inspection was excellent and that they followed their own procedures which not revealed major malfunctions. It would appear the Authorities do not want to open a "Pandora's box" to discover unwanted truths

The apparent Ignorance of the European National Aviation Authorities regarding their own systems concerns AEI. They claim that they have never observed Pilots not writing down defects when they occur; why would they? Nobody would speed with a Police Officer sitting next to them. If the Inspecting Teams do not know where to look (the majority of members of inspection teams have little or no hands-on experience with actual aviation maintenance) or are afraid to investigate out of fear for what they may find. As authorities they want to play safe by looking at procedures rather than find errors.

Some authorities may think; why check? Because if they do find systematic errors it means they have failed in their purpose or is it they have been looking the other way for too long? This omission may be to confrontational to handle, or in the case when National Authorities do find malfunctions, they are required to confront their National Airlines, and they are more interested in maintaining "good" relations

rather than carry out their main function of safety. In addition, despite national and international voluntary reporting systems, our members do not always report all system incidents or process failures, because our membership continue to be confronted with Employers willing to severely punish any Reporters of these incidents, when reported to the outside world.

The Promoters of the reporting systems inform the world that they are confidential, but what is confidential when from any Logbook, or Maintenance sheet an Employer can easily find the most likely Person that worked on the aircraft, the report refers to. The “Whistle Blowers” Regulation does not exist to the extent that if an Engineer is “uncovered” and loses his/her job, despite what was uncovered may save lives, the Engineer is out of a job, loses money, promotion, etc.

Before sending out the safety warning and receiving little positive response, AEI had the feeling that the Authorities could be trusted to do their job, but as AEI has received little responses, AEI believes this was a wrong assumption and a too positive attitude. AEI will continue to confront the Public, the European Transport Committee, as well as EASA with these results, and will demand an investigation of the failure to carry out this request.

The authorities are acting like the old fashioned Doctor who only wants to look at your tongue while the whole body shows signs of illness, and refuses to carry any further investigation. As Aircraft Engineers, we take our jobs seriously and therefore AEI has initiated a request to our members to actively record Aircraft Registration, date of logbook, and count the number of flights, reported defects, and when they are reported. This information will give AEI the proof required to demand the Authorities to finally “do their job”. It seems AEI is the only organisation that is prepared to take up the glove and fight for the aviation safety the public requires.

In addition, AEI have again raised the issue of Aircraft Engineers Licenses illegally being issued by a number of European National Authorities and the unwillingness of these authorities, as well as EASA to withdraw these Licenses. If for example there was a similar situation where Nurses were given a Doctor’s Certificate to start performing as Doctors, nobody in their right mind would accept that this was an acceptable situation, and if allowed to continue, a public outcry would certainly restore the correct situation. Respective National Authorities have not taken, in AEI’s opinion, their responsibility seriously despite the fact they continue to claim that Safety is their first priority?

AEI is against any form of General Pardon with regards to illegally acquired licenses, as it now appears to be the standard behaviour. AEI therefore demands EASA take the necessary steps to pressure the European NAA’s to take their responsibility seriously and have these licenses withdrawn.

From other sources we have received information that the present neglect of EASA Part 66 conversion rule continues, even though officially this has been completed.

If AEI does not bring these issues forward nobody else will.

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