

AEI Press Release

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Passenger safety under threat, Airlines deliberately ignoring safety regulations and get away with it!

Earlier this year AEI the global body representing Aircraft Maintenance Engineers requested its members to check as many aircraft logbooks as possible within the airlines they work for in order to investigate if Pilots are reporting defects as they occur. As reported in earlier AEI Press Release's http://www.airengineers.org/AEI_press_releases , it can now be confirmed as a result of those requested investigations that the majority of European Airline Pilots **do not always report** defects as and when they occur. Despite clear regulations a large proportion of system failures are reported after the homebound flight or even delayed until after the last flight of the day when it is more convenient for the airlines to carry out repairs.

This selective reporting not only creates a situation where aircraft regularly take-off in an unsafe or unairworthy condition but also highlights a incredible lack of concern for the safety of the travelling public. Also of great concern is the continuous looking in the opposite direction behaviour by the regulators who despite being informed about this practice choose not to act. To date no significant action or investigation has been undertaken. Back in October 2007 AEI challenged all European Aviation Authorities, including the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to carry out a logbook review of the airlines under their control. This easily undertaken inspection selecting logbooks at random would have instantly revealed if AEI's claims had substance. **Not one single European authority** indicated that they would be prepared to take up our challenge.

In fact of the replies AEI received from the authorities a large percentage actually claimed that their system of auditing and control over the airlines was "perfect" and they therefore saw no need for them to substantiate our claims. This shocking response from the regulators makes it clear to us that they do not want to open "Pandora's box" as it will reveal some unwanted truths about poor regulation. With the recent criticisms of both the FAA and Transport Canada leading to claims that the regulators had become "too cosy" with industry, AEI is concerned that European Authorities and Inspectors have also allowed themselves to become too close to those airlines they should be regulating.

AEI last year suggested to the European Transport Committee that less than 50% of audit findings uncovered in 2006 had actually been resolved. Unfortunately AEI has strong reasons to believe

that this year is no better; however this is only a guess as a cloak of secrecy now protects the data. AEI cannot gain access to any of the relevant information. Is there something to hide?

Unfortunately the European regulatory structure put in place to protect European citizens is in fact nothing more than a toothless tiger when actually called upon to react. The system takes far too long to correct anomalies (if they are corrected at all), is susceptible to politics and the controlling organisation (the EU) does not have the flexibility to act when actually needed. Furthermore the backbone of the regulatory structure, accountability, is nonexistent. The recent investigation into the Helios tragedy is an excellent example. The official report is critical of the regulating authorities both national and international, but nothing of any significance has really changed or improved and nobody has yet been held accountable.

Such failings of regulatory oversight leaves the European Travelling public unaware and uncertain if the airlines they use are in fact fulfilling their obligations by operating to the required levels of safety. Such failings also significantly increase the "risks" associated with flying.

At this year's AEI congress in Malmö, Sweden, AEI will again be highlighting these failings and reminding the Authorities and EU Transport Committee of their responsibilities.

It seems they may have lost sight of the fact that **AIR SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT**

For further information contact the AEI head office or on our website

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