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Fred Bruggeman · Secretary General

From the Secretary General **Date: 20th January 2009**

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to begin by wishing all aircraft engineers and mechanics a safe, prosperous and healthy 2009.

Just before Christmas our colleagues from SITEMA in Portugal went on strike fighting for fair wages and working conditions after negotiations failed to find a solution. During the strike pilots employed by TAP, the Portuguese national carrier, decided to undermine the legal strike of our engineer colleagues by ignoring ETOPS (extended Twin Engine Operation) and other safety related regulations on several occasions due to the lack of maintenance cover and the expected delays this might cause. Examples can be found on the AEI website.

At times the situation became ridiculous with large areas of tech log pages either crossed out or covered in Tippex once the crew realised that the aircraft would be grounded or at least severely delayed with such open items. On discovering this appalling safety oversight our colleagues reported their findings to TAP management and called upon AEI to assist in exposing the situation for what it was; unsafe. This led to TAP management accusing both AEI and SITEMA of attracting negative media attention based upon untruths. Some even went as far as accusing union members of committing industrial terrorism.

Of course this all ceased once management realised that we had plenty of evidence and were prepared to publish it. I also contacted the Portuguese Pilots organisation as well as the European Cockpit Association to see what could be done to clear up the situation and stop this. Unfortunately both organisations choose not to respond in a positive manner.

We understand that the pilot organisations are not very happy with the general situation but we are still waiting for signs of any positive action from either airlines or pilot associations.

Will there be any action taken in order to ensure safety remains paramount particularly as far as the prompt reporting of failures is concerned?

We understood that the Portuguese Authorities (INAC) are currently checking TAP log books as a result of our actions. However this response needs to be seen throughout Europe and not just at one airline from one authority. We need to be assured that pilots are reporting system defects when they occur rather than when convenient.

From the AEI Secretary General January 2009

In addition during times of economic crisis such as we face now there is a real risk that safety will suffer and the recent actions at TAP could become more common. I therefore urge you all to remain professional and vigilant. As defenders of aviation safety you do have both the possibility and the responsibility to report such incidents. (confidentially & anonymously for the authorities you can also report through AEI see:

[Confidential Reporting Form](#)

We received feedback from the EASA Standardization Director that last December all EU national authorities were explicitly asked to perform logbook checks and report back to EASA with their findings in order to gauge the true situation.

EASA have also been true to their word and insisted on immediate action from one NAA after AEI had supplied logbook information relating to one operator under their control. However in order to be able to continue building upon our success we do need to be able to provide more evidence highlighting the non reporting of faults culture from a number of airlines to EASA.

We therefore urgently request data from the logbooks of your airlines to be sure that the situation is dealt with promptly. We request each affiliate to supply **at least a dozen** (but preferably more) logbook checks with the data presented as per the attached excel file.

I cannot emphasize enough how important the information obtained from such a survey will be.

Fred Bruggeman AEI Secretary General [Sg AT airengineers.org](mailto:Sg@airengineers.org) for further information. [Sorry for writing the email this way but this will prevent SPAM.](#)