

Aircraft Engineers International

Hoofddorp, Netherlands

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From the Secretary General

Dear Fellow Engineers, Pilots, Co-workers, and other interested persons.

AEI has continued its investigation within the various airlines, our member engineers operate for, to seek for violations of the existing aviation laws to uphold the needed safety levels. From our own and other investigations we see more and more evidence that airlines take short cuts, when it concerns aviation safety. Recently the article in the newspaper US today about 65000 flight flown with aircraft where maintenance actions were not performed properly, while they are required before continuation of the flight shows this clearly. Would these rules been applied properly 65000 would not have been flown or had to be postponed till the problems where fixed. Airlines have flown with aircrafts where maintenance packages or particular maintenance actions were (long) overdue. The FAA (USA) is in a position to easily fine airlines when such evidence surfaces with severe financial penalties up and above Millions of US Dollars, That hurts! On top of that, they "**blame and Shame**" (through transparent rules) those airlines with publications on the internet for all to see, about these penalties and the reasons why they were issued.

Presently we have evidence of European Airlines (or anywhere else on this globe) who do the same, however without any noticeable action from the National Authorities, even if we (AEI or a local affiliates of AEI) have given such similar evidence to the authorities, clearly showing abuse of regulation for the sake of the almighty (although presently weakening) Euro. The Regulators within Europe (Including EASA as the European overall Aviation Agency) or in most other parts of the world, prefer to turn a blind eye, when confronted with such abuses instead of acting swift and decisive, as is their main task as governing body. This (probably) to "help" the airline or to prevent them from having to leave their cosy offices and having to go out in the cold, hot or wet weather, to do what they are supposed to do, Proper Oversight.

In Europe, the Airlines are assisted in this fraudulent behaviour by the European structure where the enforcement of aviation law is in the hands of a political driven committee of the European Parliament, where politics instead of experience and knowledge of regulation, seems to rule. With the latest update of the EU regulation, they have introduced the possibility to also fine airlines, but the procedure is such that it is time consuming and so complicated that although in force for about 2 years, we have not heard of any fine given to an airlines or operator. In addition the European Airlines have organised meetings for themselves, where they openly discuss and share information on ways how best to "**bypass**" parts of the existing European regulation, as well as (and this is even more dangerous) how to create ways to prevent having to the even perform the most strongly required maintenance actions, when they are en-route with an aircraft and not on home or maintenance base. This creates a situation that when aircraft have defects en-route, they do not take the necessary precaution or repairs, but continue to fly as if the aircraft is fully serviceable and no other limitations required from the Minimum Equipment List (MEL) with all the related risks.

And best of all, they get away with it easily, because the National Authorities don't show an interest or simply do not "**want**" to find out. Otherwise this would require them to take aggressive action and that would "disturb" the good relations between airline operator and the overseeing authority (and maybe confront the airline that "pampers" them when they travel)? In other parts of industry this would be called taking bribes, here it is called

keeping the "open relation" smooth.

Over the years we have issued several worldwide safety warnings against these known practises. So far they are ignored by authorities and airlines or at best some authorities

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committed themselves and "promised investigations" in these subjects.

Now for already more than a year no results of such actions have been seen neither something was reported and to us such investigation seems very simple, **a 1 day investigation by 1 persons** is all it should take and would be more than sufficient to uncover such practises in a initial check. Which could depending of the outcome results in further investigation and could be very easily properly directed to where the real problems are. Maybe that is to simply for the NAA's, it may not be a scientific study by university educated staff? The result of this ignorance is, that this way they stall the process hoping AEI get tired of it. Hoping it will all die out or we, as AEI, give up complaining about this, so they can go back to sleep? AEI however committed itself to protect the safety of the passenger and crew and will not give up, no matter how much ignorance we may meet or resistance we may get.

We are asking our colleagues (Engineers and Mechanics) around the world if they are willing to share their findings with AEI. Share your bad experiences and the known fraud with the airlines or maintenance organisations you work for, with us.

On our website on the right-hand side or follow this link

<http://www.airengineers.org/docs/AEI%20Confidential%20Reporting%20Form%20for%20Occurrences%20that%20affect%20Airworthiness.pdf> you will find a confidential reporting possibility where reports can be sent. **USE IT!**

AEI will keep these reports away from the authorities and employers because despite the required protection that should have been organised for almost 2 years¹ by local authorities, according to EASA's own regulation. We feel sorry to say but in our experience most aviation authorities cannot be trusted, they are often in bed with the airlines or they are too much entwined and people working for the authorities often have old ties with, or old careers in the airlines they oversee. We have several of our colleagues, who came to the authorities with such serious evidence and some have lost their jobs or there careers have been ruined for live when this information that "should have been Top Secret" was shared with the employer of the messenger. AEI can be trusted to protect your information and use it to only correct these situations where we can.

What we need are MEL (Minimum Equipment List) abuses, use of false MEL references to continue operation, Ignored MEL procedures; Prove off Pilots performing illegal maintenance actions, like system test in cockpit (often not recorded) while these should be performed by properly trained qualified technical staff. Colleagues bear in mind that if you read the MEL and the pre-amble of this MEL often specifically state that the source of any defects must be known before you can use the reference in the MEL to defer defect for later repair. Presently on most line stations engineers are (by order of the airline) no longer present at the turn around of aircrafts but are only called to the job if an AOG (aircraft on Ground) situation is reported. If not reported "nobody but the pilots" and sometimes home base maintenance control knows and hide it. Practise and abuses by pilots, who do not completely understand the MEL and its rules for use properly are also welcome.

This is becoming the standard instead of the exception to the rule. They (pilots) ignore this information or the airline in question pushes the pilots to do things they are not allowed to do, such as perform maintenance system tests, pulling circuit breakers (often illegal for trouble shooting), reset computer etc. These illegal actions (particularly if not recorded in logbooks) jeopardize the safe operation and pilots do not understand that all those actions are not recorded anywhere and might lead to accidents such as the recent Turkish Airlines where defect that "initiated the crash", continue to exist without interference of technical staff, to either repair or properly de-activate a system when they were not reported during the flights prior to the accident. With Turkish Airlines, this was discovered on the flight data

recorder after the Crash. Hopefully investigation will reveal why this was not reported when the authorities are "willing and brave enough" to investigate these events. Did this "not reporting of defects" happened for specific operational reasons as a result of the existing culture where pilot "knows it all" and pilots think they have to right to decide that they can postpone to write such things in the logbook until after flight into home base, or even worse when convenient for the airline in question?

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If further investigation on this happens, and AEI sure hope it will, it might uncover the role of the Turkish Aviation Authorities also, since they were one of the authorities to which AEI has sent 2 safety warnings about this misbehaviour, without ever having received an answer, let alone action as result of this warning. We still do not know what happened in the cockpit since that is kept away from the public. The report has come out Friday the 7th of May and could be downloaded from the website.

<http://www.onderzoeksraad.nl/en/index.php/onderzoeken/Neergestort-tijdens-nadering/#rapporten>

Each of us engineers knows that most computers in aircraft store such defect information of faults generated by on board systems as well as many of the systems being switched on or off during operation proving what happens actually in the cockpit whilst operating an aircraft and therefore it can often easily be found out by engineers that defects have occurred on a different stretch then what pilots writes down in the logbook. You or your organisation does not have to be a member of AEI to report such events to AEI if you fear your own reporting system or company culture. In our battle to uphold safety we feel it is more important to get as much information from anybody out there, rather than to ignore it because it was not sent by some of our affiliated organisations.



Talk no evil, See no evil, Hear no evil!

Disregarding what others do, AEI is seriously committed to Safety for the Flying passenger and Safety At Work and is not politically driven. We do not want

to keep our mouth shut, close our eyes for reality or remain deaf for those in our industry who walk around feeling bad because they know that what happens is wrong but there organisation is not seriously committed to safety enough to value the reports about unsafe situations.

Airlines and Maintenance...Organisations need to have an open culture where management is willing to listen and learn about unsafe work and not try to shoot the messenger because that is better for the level of their management bonus when they operate profitable instead of safe. If that is not possible AEI can assist to be there for them.

Safety First is not just a phrase to be used to please the flying public but a way of life for those working in aviation, pilots and engineers alike.

AEI Secretary General

Note 1: according to EASA own regulation (EC 216-2008 art 16)