



**ECA**  
Piloting Safety

## President's column

by Dirk Polloczek

It was my intention to start 2015 with an optimistic view on this year, as we expect a number of important decisions for the airline industry to be taken. Flags of convenience, fair competition, pilot training and aviation safety legislation are only some of the points we have on our To-Do list for this year. But the recent events in France unfortunately make it necessary to talk – once again – about security in our industry.

After the tragic days in Paris that shocked the whole continent, we need to take a critical and proactive look at the security environment we operate our aircrafts in. It is therefore helpful that ECA just released its comprehensive “Secure Skies” brochure, in which we outline the security challenges for our industry and the responses to give – both at European level and globally. “Secure Skies” was produced by the experts in our ECA Security working group under the leadership of my predecessor Nico Voorbach, who himself is a security specialist. You will find this brochure on our website [www.eurocockpit.be](http://www.eurocockpit.be)

Although the technical and organisational possibilities have improved throughout the industry, the way we provide secure skies has hardly changed in the last decade. We still use the same tools, we still apply the same rules, we still rely on the same people, and add one security measure on top of the other, instead of taking a comprehensive and predictive approach. Some elements changed a little here and there, some new rules were adopted. But in the time to come, with the forecasted average growth of five percent per year in passenger numbers, this system won't be appropriate anymore in the near future. A quote from an interview with the president of a police officers' union in a European country says it all: “We have to stop organising aviation security like a party service by private companies, with the same product for everybody!”

Our passengers can be assured that we as pilots take every necessary step to deliver a secure and safe product. But we need European decision makers to take some important steps in the right direction. When the threats change the

reactions need to follow – or even better: anticipate them through a comprehensive security management approach, involving all elements of the security chain. From my point of view the threats are about to change – and our tools and approaches need to change too!

## Reshaping and strengthening aviation security

The heightened security measures for passengers and crews at airports have become cumbersome and do represent a big challenge for the aviation business' expansion. However, new threats keep emerging: we are facing record levels of laser attacks and cyber threats are lurking behind the corner. Aviation industry is changing. And so are the needs of the aviation security regimes. In a newly released publication, ECA maps out the key areas of aviation security for today and tomorrow as well as the pilots' perspective on reshaping security in our sector.



“Secure Skies” is the result of the operational experience of airline pilots and their close involvement in the work carried out by ICAO, the EU, National Authorities and aviation stakeholders. In this publication ECA provides the pilots’ perspective on how security and facilitation are currently handled and why a different way of thinking and approaching aviation security is needed to address the current air traffic growth in Europe.

The world has seen the exponential growth of additional measures for crews and passenger alike: screenings, including the use of metal detectors, canine brigades, explosive trace detectors but also body, shoe, liquids and luggage scanners. The introduction of additional multiple layers has progressively rendered the whole aviation security system cumbersome. Its usefulness however, has not been improved while the related cost has increased exponentially.

Moving from a reactive perspective to a more proactive and predictive one, integrating threat assessment, risk management, differentiation, unpredictability & randomness at security screening becomes essential. The aim is to ensure better security while allowing the majority of passengers who do not pose a threat to receive a speedy and efficient screening.

But beyond that, there is a need to go back to basics and ask the question: “If we build the entire security system from scratch, how would it look like?”

As “Secure Skies” argues, the entire system needs a reboot. Read more in the publication on

[www.eurocockpit.be/pages/secure-skies](http://www.eurocockpit.be/pages/secure-skies)

## What if... .. airlines were to decide for themselves how to be safe?

**There are several approaches when it comes to regulating safety in different industries. Regulators can prescribe exactly what actions entities (e.g. airlines) are to take to improve their safety performance. They can also prescribe the desired outcome allowing the regulated entity to decide how to achieve this. This so-called ‘Performance-Based Regulation’ approach can become an important tool to manage and enhance aviation safety in view of the expected significant growth in air traffic. Yet, it can also pose new hazards if implemented or overseen inadequately.**

In a position paper published today, the European Cockpit Association outlines the potential benefits of Performance-Based Regulation (PBR), as well as the related hazards and ways to prevent them. Evidence shows that if implemented or overseen inadequately, Performance-Based Regulation can turn into a real threat to aviation safety, rather than the intended contrary. The financial sector, the oil drilling industry and the Fukushima disaster have shown the potentially catastrophic consequences of relying mainly on the industry to craft and monitor solutions for safety problems.

“You have got to make sure that the new ‘model’ works before you do away with the old one,” says ECA President Capt. Dirk Polloczek. “Compliance and ‘box ticking’ exercises, which are common nowadays, are not sufficient in our current dynamic industry. But loosely specified Performance-Based Regulation standards – combined with ‘light-touch’ oversight – can also pose a threat. This is why the implementation of PBR will have to be a gradual, step-by-step process that includes regular assessment and feedback loops, an “emergency break” mechanism and ability to be strictly overseen.”

The successful implementation of a performance-based system into aviation will depend to a large extent on the ability of oversight authorities, such as National Aviation Authorities and EASA, to provide sufficient and adequate resources and expertise, as this type of oversight will be significantly more resource-intensive than today’s checking of compliance with prescriptive rules.

“There is a long list of potential benefits associated with PBR, such as more effective risk management and more efficient oversight” says Capt. Paul Reuter, ECA Technical Board Director. “So it is a step which European pilots are committed to accompany at all levels. To succeed, several preconditions need to be fulfilled: The system’s ‘maturity’ at European, national and operator-level, must be assessed and established prior to implementing such a scheme, including a prior assessment of the operators’ and organisations’ internal safety culture. And front-end safety professionals – in particular flight crew and their representation – need to be involved as equal stakeholders at all stages and levels. Only if the system is based on mutual trust and transparency, will we be able to reap the expected safety benefits.”

Download the [position paper on www.eurocockpit.be](http://www.eurocockpit.be)



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ECA is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 38.000 pilots from across Europe

European Cockpit Association AISBL – Piloting Safety  
Rue du Commerce 20-22 / B-1000 Brussels  
[www.eurocockpit.be](http://www.eurocockpit.be) / [communications@eurocockpit.be](mailto:communications@eurocockpit.be)

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