

Best Wishes for 2014!

The President's word



Cpt. A. Vanalderweireldt

New tailwind norms at EBBR: Your Pilot Reports are needed!

Why do our politicians keep changing the Brussels Airport tailwind (TW) limitations in the AIP? Just to shift the noise created by airport operations from one area to another? During this sunny summer with prevailing Easterly winds, the most used runway configuration was runway 01 for landing and runway 07R for take off, concentrating noise produced at low altitude over the areas South and Southeast of the airport.

“ We need to show to the people comfortably seated in their office that this change is potentially dangerous

Since September 19, a maximum TW component of 12 knots (max 7 kts stabilised and max 12 kts gusts included) for Runways 25 is published in the AIP. With this recent change, the State Secretary Wathelet's cabinet expects to please people living South of the airport (Kraainem, Woluwe, Tervueren, etc.), increasing the overflying of the "Noordrand" (e.g. Grimbergen) and Brussels city. And we can expect the "rules of the game" to change again when a new State Secretary for Transport will be nominated after next year's elections!

BeCA's policy is not to get involved into the political fights over noise spreading plans. Unless these changes can compromise safety...

Not only does this 12-knot figure exceed many Airplane Flight Manuals limitations, but it also leaves a limited margin for planes with higher TW limits. Safety margins are essential in aviation and in this case are

justified because wind throughout an approach is not always linear and can shift and/or increase in altitude. High tailwinds aloft can create unstabilised approaches and reported winds on the ground are average values. Note that the "wind check" issued by EBBR Tower Controllers on short final is an instant wind reading. The often heard excuse of "pilots can always request a runway more into the wind" is quite hypocritical, since Belgocontrol admits that a runway change in EBBR can take up to 30 minutes, which often exceeds the extra fuel upon arrival.

This is one more example of how politicians and bureaucrats can adopt measures that are outside of the reality of air operations. And this is where we, as BeCA members and pilots, come into play.



We need to show to the people comfortably seated in their office that this change is potentially dangerous. Belgocontrol policy is now to start the runway change procedure as soon as they receive 2 complaints about excessive tailwind aloft. We therefore encourage every pilot to report excessive tailwind during approach via ASRs and directly on ATC frequency.

Together, we can have the pilots' voice heard!

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New EU FTL rules: What's next?

On 9 October 2013, the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) unexpectedly adopted the Commission's controversial proposed rules on aircrew Flight Time Limitations (FTL). This came as a sad surprise as a few weeks before, the European Parliament (EP) Transport Committee had voted against it. As you know, BeCA, hand-in-hand with the European Cockpit Association (ECA), had lobbied intensively at national level and organised many actions these past years, calling for safer rules. Unfortunately, the politicians once more conceded to the airlines' demands, rejecting scientific recommendations and compromising aviation safety. But the battle continues.

What happened?

Usually, once an EP Committee makes a vote on a proposal, the EP plenary simply follows its advice. This is why the vote was such a surprise to all European pilots' associations, who had invested a lot of efforts and time in this issue.

There are two main reasons why the EU Parliament made this decision. First of all, the airlines fiercely lobbied towards the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and European politicians. The result was a flawed drafting process from the very beginning and EASA disregarding numerous scientific reports, losing its legitimacy as a "neutral" agency.

Secondly, our main ally in this battle, the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF, representing transport workers in Europe, including cabin crew and some pilots), who closely collaborated with ECA throughout the whole process, suddenly changed sides on the day before the vote. Without notice, the steering committee unilaterally decided to send a letter to all MEPs, supporting the proposed rules, without consulting their national members. This obviously weakened our position and created a lot of confusion about the crews' position.



What's next?

We should not focus on the past, but rather look at the future. Let's be honest, the text still contains many safety loopholes. We demanded more prescriptive rules, but we got a blind trust in Fatigue Risk Management Systems (FRMS), which we know are not reliable. Basically, the new rules set the same limitations as the current EU legislation, but it will be much easier for the airlines to deviate from the rules, based on their FRMS. And we cannot count on EASA to effectively oversee these derogations.

BeCA, together with ECA, will therefore continue fighting, but on a different level. We now must

ensure that the rules are interpreted and implemented in a safety-oriented way; that FRMS are used properly, involving crew representatives and with effective oversight from European and national authorities; and that fatigue reporting by aircrew is used in a frank and open manner.

ETF Betrayal: "Not in my name" letter

Every Belgian pilot who is a member of a union is listed as an "ETF pilot" through his/her union membership. In some way, ETF therefore used YOUR union membership to give more legitimacy to their letter to MEPs.

Although BeCA has always had (and will continue to have) good relationships with trade unions, this situation is unacceptable. We will therefore soon inform all our members on the best way to react to ensure this does not happen again in the future.

Brussels Airlines negotiations: State of play

On 18-19 November 2013, Brussels Airlines pilots massively participated in the strike called by trade unions. Since SABENA bankruptcy, it has actually been unusual to see Belgian pilots on strike. It has indeed been used as the very last resort to protect our fundamental labour rights and working conditions. For over a year, Brussels Airlines pilots have called their management to discuss and improve the “Beyond 2012” plan. Without success. The strike was therefore the only remaining option to get our legitimate demands heard.

“ *There is no such thing as a successful strike. But sometimes, this is a necessary evil.* ”

In December 2012, the restructuring plan “Beyond 2012” was adopted and pilots were asked to accept the measures or the company would go bankrupt. Which they did: part-time contracts for all pilots; increase in the working time and decrease in the rest time; freezing of salaries; closure of the employer pension contributions; 58+ pilots forced into retirement; etc. However, since its signature, the plan has raised many concerns among pilots, who identified some of the measures as inappropriate. A few examples: shortage of pilots and flight cancellations due to imposing part-time contracts to pilots; medium-haul pilots who did not receive their extra days off linked to forced part-time; long-haul pilots working 100% who were paid 90%, etc.

Despite the many complaints sent to the management, pilots were not heard. They were already the most affected by the plan, but they were asked to make even more “efforts”, while the company was following contradictory policies, such as planning to hire ab initio pilots after terminating some 58+ pilots’ contracts or stopping the pension contributions but keeping the Korongo project at Lubumbashi, which is a financial disaster.

This is why Brussels Airlines pilots went on strike. There is no such thing as a successful strike, as it is always the result of failed negotiations. Yes, they are aware of the financial situation of their company. No, they are not irresponsible. They don’t like strikes. But sometimes, this is a necessary evil. Thanks to these actions, pilots and management have come back to the table. Let’s now

hope that the company will propose fair solutions in the coming months!



Timeline of the strike:

- December 2012: Beyond 2012 plan adopted – pilots send many complaints about measures considered inappropriate
- 18-19 November 2013: pilots go on strike to ask for the management to respect signed agreements
- 29 November: union delegates decide to continue negotiations
- 2 December: conciliation meeting between the pilots and the management concludes with clear recommendations for both sides
- 4 December: Brussels Airlines communication shows the company is unwilling to respect the agreement
- 12 December: union delegates call all pilots to restart actions as of 20 December
- 18 December: the strike threat is cancelled, following a meeting with the chairman of the board Mr. Davignon. All 58+ are re-hired under normal employee contracts and forced part time is cancelled 1 year earlier than planned in “Beyond 2012”
- January 2014: negotiations over the employer pension contribution, overtime payment (basket) and annual leave allocation continue

Thomas Cook Belgium: Positive achievements



In September 2012, we were confronted with a serious cost-saving exercise within the company. The flying staff was of course one of the cost-cutting targets. Negotiations were tough and lasted for more than 11 months. But, thanks to the staff representatives' energy and time and the flying staff's trust and patience, our efforts paid off and an agreement was signed with the management.

New Collective Labor Agreement

Three main issues were included in the new CLA:

- in exchange for a gross salary reduction, Thomas Cook will invest in a fleet expansion and offer a 2-year job guarantee to its flying staff.
- this gross salary reduction will continue for another 2 years to block the setting up of a lower B pay scale for new pilots or upgraded pilots.
- after these 4 years, all pilots will go back to their old gross salary.

BeCA Executive Committee would like to express its warmest thanks to those involved in the negotiations: be aware that your investment in time and energy has been highly appreciated!

Other negotiations on a better Loss of License scheme and a livable upgrading policy are still ongoing. We wish those involved a lot of success and we will let you know about new developments.

Pilots' unity in Europe strengthened

On the European level, we see a rapidly evolving airline and travel industry. More and more airlines are members of a group and try to get organised under one single umbrella. On the pilot side, BeCA has done the same by actively contributing to the work of the European Cockpit Association (ECA).

In the past years, regular meetings between the pilot associations of the countries where Thomas Cook is based (Belgium, England, Scandinavia, Germany) had already taken place. But a closer and more formal way of working was needed. In order to get a common understanding between all of us,

BeCA, the British Air Line Association (BALPA), TCPU Scandinavia (TCPU) and Vereinigung Cockpit (VC) agreed upon:

- an ongoing exchange of information
- sharing knowledge and experiences, including details of our collective labor agreements, national laws and regulations
- sharing other important information to protect and enhance our professional interests and job security
- avoiding any action that could reduce the leverage available to another Member Association.

The European management of Thomas Cook Airlines will now have a single point of contact to consult for issues that concern all the pilots across the group. Regular meetings are planned to discuss different topics. Since the long-term goal of Thomas Cook is to have a single European AOC, under which all the airliners will operate, there will be a lot of work ahead of us, but we are confident that this new structure will make us stronger!

News from the World

UPS Fire - Investigation Report

On 3 September 2010, a B747-400F from UPS caught fire at Dubai International airport, due to lithium batteries it was carrying. In July 2013, the accident investigation report was published (<http://gcaa.gov.ae/en>). The Flight Safety Foundation wrote a very interesting article summarising the main causes and recommendations, which you can read at: <https://docs.google.com/a/beca.be/file/d/0B7J8-WthNOakWTNRYndHcElzN2M/edit>



« BeCA bonjour, goeie dag »

This is how you are welcomed when I pick up the phone.

I sometimes get a “Simonne, is that still you?”

And... yes! I have been around for 20 years already. Since 25 October 1993, I have managed the day-to-day business of your association, you all have either heard my voice when answering your phone calls, or seen my name at the bottom of one of my emails.



There were happy times and less happy ones according to circumstances, but I am still there and will continue my work for BeCA. As you can see from the picture, my 20-year anniversary was not forgotten. My warmest thanks to you for the beautiful flowers.

Talk to you soon, whether in person, by phone or email.

Simonne

IMPORTANT

Special Loss of Licence Deal for BeCA members with APPN

- In addition to your company Loss of Licence scheme
- No additional medical exam, only Class 1 fit and written declaration
- Belgian AME medical decisions accepted
- All rebates benefit to BeCA/APPN members
- 50% discount on monthly administrative costs for BeCA members
- Partial refund of non-used contributions every year (2,5 months in 2009 = 20%)
- Program open to join up to **45 years**
- Three Schemes:
 - Permanent Loss of Licence from 80,000 to 600,000€ (maximum coverage for new members 340,000€)
 - Basic contract: decreasing 10% each year from 51y to 60y
 - Contract 55/65: decreasing 10% each year from 55y to 65y
 - Temporary Loss of Licence with monthly compensation
 - Life insurance up to 690,000€ (maximum coverage for new membership 330,000€)

News from Europe

The future of aviation – Your future!

As a pilot, do you fully understand what is at stake in Europe? Then, you should read (and share) the recently published “Flight Plan to Safety”, written by highly professional pilot experts from the European Cockpit Association, of which BeCA is an active member. It offers a unique overview on the future (threats) for commercial aviation from the pilots’ perspective! You can download the plan on the [European Cockpit Association's website](#).



New Regulation on Occurrence Reporting

The European Parliament Transport Committee recently adopted a non-punitive reporting scheme. Thanks to ECA experts' lobbying, the text contains many positive provisions, including:

- Better protection for all people involved
- Internal rules to implement Just Culture principles should be developed at organisation level
- Fatigue becomes a mandatory occurrence

The regulation will pass through the EU legislative process and should enter into force around Sept/Oct 2015.

Cockpit Flash

Newsletter from the Belgian Cockpit Association

January - March 2014

BeCA Executive Committee's 2014 Greetings

BeCA's Executive Committee would like to wish you a Prosperous New Year. 2013 has been another busy and challenging year for the pilots' community. But thanks to our unity and hard work, we have got a lot of positive achievements at national and European levels, such as the new EU Occurrence reporting scheme and a solution for Brussels Airlines' pilots. BeCA has become an unavoidable partner in all aviation-related issues, fighting for our rights and our profession. Thank you all for your support and see you in 2014 with the same energy and commitment!



From left to right: Bart Smet, An Schamp, Alain Vanalderweireldt, Simonne Charles, Vinciane Cabaret, Christophe Verleye and Didier Moraine.

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