

Press Release

Brussels, 27 March 2015

Belgian pilots condemn the leaking of information and speculations around the Germanwings air accident

The Belgian Cockpit Association deplors and condemns the leaking of information from the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) of Germanwings Flight 4U 9525, as well as the allegations made by the French prosecutor about the possible causes of the accident. This is contrary to the principles and procedures of a safety investigation, as laid down in ICAO Annex 13. The data from the flight recorders must be used for the sole purpose of improving safety and not for apportioning blame.

At this stage of the investigation, we know the plane, an A320, was flying from Barcelona to Düsseldorf on 24 March 2015. At 10:47, it crashed after a continuous descent of 32,000 feet that lasted approximately 10 minutes (around 3000 feet per minute). The Cockpit Voice Recorder was found and, although it is damaged, the data is useable and the analysis has started. Many statements have been heard and read accusing the co-pilot. The words “suicide” or even “terrorist attack” have been mentioned. Although these are possible theses (among many other theories), we would like to stress that only a fulfilled investigation can lead to these conclusions.

For a safety investigation to be valid, we absolutely need the two flight recorders: the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR), which contains the noises and voices in the cockpit of the last 30 minutes of the flight; and the Flight Data Recorder (FDR), which contains the technical information about the flight. Referring to “breathing sounds” or other noises to make speculations about the causes of an accident is deeply unprofessional and undermines the integrity and independence of the safety investigation.

We should be careful in seeking responses and we must let the investigators do their job. The reasons suggested on why the co-pilot started the descent, why the captain could not enter the cockpit, why the co-pilot did not open the door and why he did not respond to Air Traffic Control are pure speculations. To answer those questions, a thorough analysis of the technical information from the FDR is essential.

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