

Press Release

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Germanwings 9525 Crash: Lessons to be learnt

On 13 March 2016, almost one year after Germanwings 9525 flight crashed over the French Alps, the BEA (Bureau d'Enquêtes et d'Analyses) [published its final report and recommendations](#). Two main areas were identified: the issue of psychological evaluation of pilots and the review of the “two-persons-in-the-cockpit” principle.

As already pointed out by BeCA and IFALPA, the BEA believes that “psychiatric evaluation as part of routine aeromedical assessments of all pilots would not be productive or cost effective”, given that such psychological disorders are “relatively rare” and unpredictable. Instead, the BEA encourages operators to implement [Peer Support Programs](#) in a just culture environment, as well as proper mitigation measures of the “socio-economic risks related to a loss of licence”. [BeCA/IFALPA have already highlighted](#) the efficiency of such programs and recommend that they be established by pilots’ associations to assist their own members.

On the “two-persons-in-the-cockpit” principle, [BeCA/ECA had previously argued](#) that such rule – which was recommended by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and implemented by many airlines shortly after the Germanwings tragedy – is not an effective tool, as it may bring new risks, arising from e.g. the presence in the cockpit of people who are not properly trained or unclear procedures. The BEA’s final report fully concurs with these statements and recommends that risks be assessed and new cockpit door designs be considered.

Finally, the BEA also stresses that neither extensive psychiatric evaluation, nor the “two-persons-in-the-cockpit” procedure can “fully mitigate the risk of suicide”, as confirmed by previous accidents and incidents.

BeCA therefore fully supports the [concept of Peer Support Programs \(PSPs\)](#), which have already demonstrated their effectiveness in the USA and Germany. They are currently focused on drug and alcohol addiction. We believe their scope should be enlarged to mental health issues. BeCA invites the Belgian Civil Aviation Authority and all Belgian airlines to establish a partnership with BeCA, in order to implement such programs in Belgium.

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