

# Interview with BeCA President

## Who is BeCA?

**Can you briefly explain the history of the association and why it was founded?**

BeCA was founded in 1999, from the merger of the two pilot organizations existing then in Belgium: ABPNL and BFCA. Both associations were competing against each other, and it soon became apparent to both Steering Boards that this was not only counterproductive, but it was degrading the credibility of both associations. Uniting resources and sharing standpoints made the entire pilot group stronger.

**What is BeCA's mission and objective?**

Very clearly, BeCA's mission is to strive for the highest levels of aviation safety, to defend the pilot profession as a whole, to support pilot groups within their airlines and to assist individual members facing trouble.

Our objectives are achieved through professional working methods. We apply the same methods as managements do: we identify the problems we are facing, we analyze options with the support of internal expertise and external resources (lawyers, ECA/IFALPA and other experts). But unlike profit driven entities, BeCA has only one objective: defending pilots wherever it can. We make consensual decisions, which is not difficult most of the time because we are all in the same boat.

Of course this sometimes needs a lot of work and it may take a long time to see results, which can be frustrating. I am extremely confident in and proud of the pilots' capability to achieve their objectives when they work together with clear, objective and professional methods.

**Ok, this is theory, but in practice, what do you do and what have you done?**

We are carrying out a lot of work in a whole range of areas. But just to mention a few ones, we can already talk about Cabin Air Quality. For several years, BeCA has been actively involved in this file. Through cooperation with other pilot associations, BeCA is now representing Belgium in the European Technical Commission to create a norm on the subject as well as chairing the ECA Task Group on Cabin Air Quality. You will read more about that in the article below.

Through ECA, BeCA is one of the leading pilot association on FTL. Our expert has been involved in the drafting of the new regulation (Feb. 2016) and is now chairing the ECA working group on FTL.



**Together**



**Everyone**



**Achieves**



**More**

On pilot pension, although, we could not stop the disappearance of our special Pension scheme, we were able to make sure to have correct transitioning measures in place, thanks to our contacts and expertise. Without BeCA this would have been a whole different story. Our pension committee is still looking into alternative pension schemes and how to make sure the pilots can benefit from one.

**As an individual pilot, what benefits do I get?**

Well, you get a lot of advantages and support! But, sadly, we noticed that our members don't think of calling their association when they face a problem. BeCA is there for its members and you should never hesitate: we will always do our utmost to assist you. We usually don't talk about these services, for obvious confidentiality reasons, but we have already helped many of our colleagues.

Although the BeCA 24/7 hotline for accidents and incidents is an essential service to our members, there are many other areas where you can get our support:

- **Loss of licence:** losing our licence is never easy. This is why we have a dedicated working group, chaired by Alain Loiseau, which can assist members who encounter a temporary or permanent loss of licence. Furthermore, Alain always keeps himself up-to-date about insurances, legislation and ensures to talk with the appropriate entities to try and improve procedures and rules.
- **Medical:** the same working group also gathers information and expertise about what a pilot should do when they suffer from a medical issue, even a small one.
- **Legal support:** BeCA's lawyer offers every member legal assistance on all collective pilot issues, such as the recuperation of the VAT on pilot training.

- Fiscal advice: every year, we organize the “fiscal days”, where our tax expert helps our members fill in their tax declaration. It sometimes allows for good savings!

In addition to these individual services, we also have a wealth of information about all topics linked to the pilot profession. We gather information from different sources and we send regular updates to our members so they always keep posted. Don't forget to make sure that BeCA is in your allowed senders' list!

Last but not least, we represent Belgium-based pilots at European and international levels through our affiliation and active participation in ECA and IFALPA.

**I am trying to convince my colleagues to join, but they often reply that they are already affiliated to a union. What can I say to them?**

In Belgium, unions are not dedicated to a sole profession. They defend the collective interests of workers. However, within an airline, the pilots' focus may not always be the same as, e.g., the cabin crew's or ground staff's interests. Therefore, unions do not always have the expertise and the knowledge on specific pilots' issues. By working hand-in-hand with unions, BeCA ensures the pilots' voice is taken into account in the social dialogue process. There is a close cooperation between BeCA and unions and they complement each other.

Furthermore, most of the individual services to members (cf. previous question) are not provided by the unions.

Now you have the arguments, so spread the word and convince your colleagues to join!

**Some of my colleagues think BeCA is still “Sabena”, is that true?**

Today, the association's executive committee is run by nine pilots: three from Brussels Airlines, two from Thomas Cook Airlines Belgium, two from EAT/DHL, one from Jetairfly and two from TNT Airways. What else can I say? All Belgium-based airlines are equally represented within our executive committee (except Ryanair and VLM, but we closely follow their issues and have some good contacts within these companies. And we hope they will be able to join one day). We inherited the same fundamental spirit from the ABPNL days, i.e. “for pilots, by pilots”, but we adapted the organization to today's reality.

**With or without me, BeCA will continue its job, so why join / stay a member?**

It is first of all about representativeness: how can we be credible towards our partners and opponents if we only represent a minority of the pilot's community? If we want our voice to be heard, we need to get access to the appropriate platforms and for this, we need members.

A very good example comes from our neighbors: the Luxembourg association (ALPL) represents 95% of Luxembourg pilots. I can assure you that Luxembourg authorities and airlines will respect their standpoint!

Secondly, it is a question of solidarity. If everyone only cares for their small garden while the planet is falling apart, sooner or later, their small garden will disappear as well. These people are also the ones who want to join BeCA when they come into trouble and expect us to assist them overnight. This is not how we work: for six months after joining BeCA, the new member only gets part of our services to members.

Finally, if everyone stays alone and thinks “they will do the job anyway”, BeCA would simply disappear. And we should not always think about ourselves, but also about future pilot generations. Don't we want to give our children good prospects?

## KEEP UPDATED & CONTACT US!

To get information from us, there are 2 simple ways:

- Make sure BeCA is in your allowed email senders' list
- Check our website regularly for updates

For general enquiries and administrative issues, you know Simonne, our secretary, is always there for you! Do not hesitate to send her an email ([beca@beca.be](mailto:beca@beca.be)) or call her at +32 2 245 34 50.

If you face an accident or incident, call our 24/7 worldwide hotline: +32 2 248 03 68.

For information on issues specific to your airline, you can contact your Vice-President:

- Brussels Airlines: Christophe Sambre ([christophe.sambre@beca.be](mailto:christophe.sambre@beca.be))
- EAT/DHL: Alain Vanalderweireldt ([alain.vanal@beca.be](mailto:alain.vanal@beca.be))
- Jetairfly: Delphine Saive ([delphine.saive@beca.be](mailto:delphine.saive@beca.be))
- Thomas Cook Airlines: Bart Smet ([bart.smet@beca.be](mailto:bart.smet@beca.be))
- TNT Airways: Rémi Thirion ([remi.thirion@beca.be](mailto:remi.thirion@beca.be))

For medical or loss of licence issues, contact Alain Loiseau at [loss-of-licence@beca.be](mailto:loss-of-licence@beca.be).