EUROPE ISSUES ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING GERMANWINGS CRASH

News / Airlines



The European Commission has released an action plan, prepared by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), aimed at tackling issues raised by the Germanwings accident on March 24.

The Germanwings A320 was on a scheduled flight from Barcelona to Düsseldorf when it crashed, killing all 150 people aboard. A preliminary report on the crash by the French air accident investigation agency BEA revealed that co-pilot Andreas Lubitz, alone on the flight deck, switched the selected altitude from 38,000 ft. to 100 ft. -- the minimum value possible on an Airbus A320 -- and increased the speed of the aircraft, setting in motion an intentional fatal descent into the French Alps.

Shortly after the crash of Germanwings flight 9525, European Union transport commissioner Violeta Bulc asked EASA to come up with recommendations to prevent similar accidents. The

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EASA task force came up with six recommendations in July, focused mainly on cockpit access and more thorough crew checks, which will be implemented by the action plan.

"Concrete actions will be launched in the areas of air operations, aircrew, information technology and data protection," the Commission said.

In early December, EASA will hold an aircrew medical fitness workshop where the actions will be drafted and then agreed by the Commission, EASA, airlines, crews, doctors, among others.

Furthermore, EASA "might" publish operational directives, covering air operations and aircrew, in the first quarter of 2016. Operational directives "address specific safety issues" and lay the foundation for new rules. This would be the first time EASA has used operational directives, which guide national regulators and operators on how to implement recommendations and mandate certain actions.

Finally, EASA expects to release new acceptable means of compliance and guidance material to existing regulations by the end of 2016.

"The main assumptions for the timeline are that, based on a first assessment, the current requirements do not need to be amended and only applicable means of compliance and guidance material is needed. Also that all rulemaking tasks are part of fast-track processes. If impact assessments result in regulatory proposals for changes in the current implementing rules, the action plan will be delayed by three to six months depending on progress in the EASA committee," EASA said.

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