



HALF OF AIRLINE PILOTS REPORT FATIGUE WHICH COULD JEOPARDISE PASSENGER SAFETY

News / Airlines



Half of airline pilots have reported that fatigue is not taken seriously by airlines, in the first large-scale survey of pilots' perceptions of safety within the European aviation industry.

The survey was conducted by The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and EUROCONTROL, an intergovernmental organisation committed to delivering safe and efficient air traffic management performance.

Among the key findings of the work, 51 per cent of pilots surveyed reported that fatigue was not taken seriously by their airline, and 28 per cent of pilots felt that they had insufficient numbers of staff to carry out their work safely. In a further notable finding, less than 20 per cent of the pilots surveyed felt that their airline company cares about their well-being.

A total of 7,239 pilots from across European nations participated in the *European pilots' perceptions of safety culture in European Aviation* survey, approximately 14 per cent of Europe's total commercial pilot population, in the largest ever survey of commercial pilots on safety culture.

The results show that perceptions of safety culture are generally positive amongst pilots. The vast majority did not feel they had to take risks that made them feel uncomfortable about safety, and they indicated a high degree of confidence in their colleagues. But pilots concerns over fatigue and

understaffing suggest that many feel they are being pushed too hard by their demanding schedules.

Dr Tom Reader, Associate Professor in Organisational and Social Psychology at LSE and one of the report's co-authors, said: "Pilots, airlines, and regulators need to begin a dialogue to understand what these results means for the industry. This will help to address the concerns raised by pilots, and help to identify what could be changed to maintain the positive safety culture within the industry, while ensuring that European aviation remains competitive."

Dr Anam Parand, a researcher at LSE and one of the report's co-authors, said: "This survey presents a learning opportunity for airlines, to enable the industry to build on its reputation for safety, and to work with pilots and regulators to ensure that it continues to remain a safe mode of transport in the future.

"Clearly, there is a difficulty between balancing the needs of profitability and safety. With the increasing customer demands, airlines have to work harder to get a better balance between the two, and there's always a possibility that safety could be compromised.

"While our study doesn't show any cause and effect between fatigue and accidents, the potential for fatigued pilots to impact on safety is definitely a concern and that should be addressed. There have been a few accidents where one of the primary causes was implicated to be that of fatigue."

The survey was funded by the European Commission* under the Horizon 2020 programme Future Sky Safety, in collaboration with the European Cockpit Association.

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