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ERA STATEMENT ON CABIN CREW LICENSING

The European Regions Airline Association (ERA) which represents 70 European airlines recognises the important role Cabin Crew play in passenger and aircraft safety.

A new Regulation, known as EU OPS, will strengthen passenger and aircraft safety by ensuring that EU Member States have to legally impose the high standards of Cabin Crew training and supervision that are currently voluntary under the JAA system. The introduction of EU OPS will ensure minimum standards of safety.

The EU OPS Regulation Document has been developed from the existing technical JAR OPS over a number of years, through painstaking negotiation with experts from all partners. A common position has been reached between all partners, even though some airlines may disagree with certain of the detailed provisions. However, intense lobbying by Cabin Crew unions has delayed the introduction of necessary safety legislation.

A Cabin Crew licensing system will not ensure minimum standards of safety and may even decrease current levels of safety, since a licence will not ensure training in an individual airline's Safety Operating Procedures. While pilots and engineers' licensed skills are transferable to other airline operators, those of Cabin Crew are not, since aircraft configurations (location of emergency exits, seat layout, etc) vary among operators even with the same aircraft type.

Cabin Crew taking 'licence' qualifications at training schools will not have undertaken an airline's own recruitment, vetting and training procedures. They would have to be retrained for individual airlines' Safety Operating Procedures in order to ensure full safety compliance. However, there will be no legal obligation on airlines to carry out this training if the Cabin Crew are already 'licensed'. Crew Resource management (CRM) issues of Cabin Crew not trained by the company may also become a safety issue.

ERA regards Cabin Crew as safety professionals and has been proactive in lobbying for increased safety awareness and training undertaken by Cabin Crew. ERA has supported recent amendments to JAR OPS to include improved first aid and travel health training for Cabin Crew. ERA has actively promoted the need for JAR OPS to include winter operations awareness training for Cabin Crew and has even drafted training guidance material for this. ERA has also held a specific work group to address the problems that arise for Cabin Crew due to locked and armoured flight deck doors, and associated security checks – the conclusions were used to lobby the UKCAA for clearer regulation on security issues.

ERA supports the harmonisation of the levels of training Cabin Crew should undertake. ERA also supports an increase in these standards wherever a safety need is identified. However, there is no demonstrable definitive safety benefit in the issue of a licence to Cabin Crew.

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