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Position Paper

The challenge of fatigue in Cabin Crews operations

World Sleep Day, March 14, 2025, serves as a global reminder of the critical importance of adequate rest for airline cabin crew members. The potential consequences of insufficient sleep extend far beyond personal health concerns: fatigue directly impacts safety, operations, and aviation efficiency. As the representative body for cabin crew professionals across Europe, the European Cabin Crew Association – EurECCA – calls attention to the pressing need for improved and enforceable standards that address fatigue management in the airline industry.

The challenge of fatigue in Cabin Crew operations

- **Unique working conditions:** cabin crew members routinely work irregular schedules, with night flights, time zone changes, and extended duty hours. This combination challenges the body's natural circadian rhythms, leading to chronic sleep disruption.
- **Safety risks:** fatigue compromises alertness, decision-making, and reaction times. The slightest lapse in performance due to tiredness can have significant safety implications in emergency situations and routine flights alike.
- **Health consequences:** prolonged sleep deprivation may contribute to long-term issues such as cardiovascular disease, mental health disorders, and a weakened immune system, underscoring the need for proactive preventive measures.
- **Work-life balance:** irregular shifts often limit personal and family time, decreasing overall well-being and contributing to stress and burnout.

EurECCA's position and key objectives

- **Establish science-based duty and rest regulations:** advocate for evidence-based flight and duty time to minimize the risk of fatigue-related incidents.
- **Implement comprehensive Fatigue Risk Management Systems (FRMS):** encourage airlines to adopt advanced FRMS that integrate scientific data on sleep, risk assessment, and robust reporting mechanisms.
- **Promotion of a just culture for fatigue reporting:** implement a safety culture where cabin crew can report fatigue without fear of punitive actions, facilitating open communication and timely interventions. Implement confidential safety reporting mechanisms to encourage the reporting of fatigue-related hazards and incidents.



EurECCA's recommendations for industry and regulators

- **Regular revision of regulations:** update and adjust duty and rest times limitations to match emerging scientific findings on fatigue and sleep.
- **Invest in research and technology:** support academic and industry-led studies on fatigue detection technologies, sleep tracking, and personalized alertness management tools.
- **Transparent data sharing:** encourage the open exchange of safety reports, risk assessments, and fatigue metrics to build collective awareness and solutions to recognize and mitigate fatigue-related risks.

On World Sleep Day—and every day—EurECCA underscores that the health and safety of cabin crews is intrinsically tied to the safety of the aviation sector. Fatigue management is not an optional concern; it is a critical operational mandate. Addressing this issue is a shared responsibility that demands effective regulations, innovative solutions, and industry-wide cooperation.

By implementing comprehensive FRMS, fostering a just reporting culture, harmonizing scientifically based regulations, addressing socioeconomic factors, and enhancing training, we can significantly reduce fatigue-related risks to drive the aviation industry toward a healthier and more sustainable future.

**EurECCA represents, protects and develops the rights
and needs of all cabin crew all over Europe.**

FLYING TOGETHER – PROTECTING EACH OTHER

About EurECCA: established in Brussels in 2014, the European Cabin Crew Association, EurECCA, represents, protects and develops the rights and needs of cabin crew all over Europe. It is composed of cabin crew unions from European Union Member States as well as accession and bordering states and represents some 23,000 cabin crew accounting for 60% of all organized cabin crew in Europe. EurECCA has no political connections.

EurECCA's work is around Cabin Crew working conditions, wages, social protection and health and safety at work.

EurECCA European Cabin Crew Association AISBL
Avenue Louise 143/4
1050 Brussels, Belgium

www.eurecca.eu
contact@eurecca.eu