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Position Paper

Breakthrough in aerotoxic fumes dossier after French Court decision

Cabin air contamination constitutes a combined occupational health, passenger safety, public health, and flight safety issue within European civil aviation. EurECCA calls for urgent, precautionary, and binding European regulatory action addressing detection, prevention, cumulative risk assessment and mandatory protection frameworks.

Legal and judicial developments

Recent judicial developments in France, including the final ruling of the Tribunal Judiciaire de Toulon (19 December 2025), subsequently confirmed by the certificate of non-appeal (5 February 2026), recognized that illness may result from chronic occupational exposure to contaminated cabin air, even in the absence of a single identified acute fume event. The ruling reinforced the legal relevance of long-term, cumulative, and invisible exposure scenarios.

This decision represents an important milestone for the recognition of occupational health risks affecting aircrew.

Occupational health and cumulative exposure

Cabin air contamination must not be framed solely as a rare acute-event phenomenon. Operational experience indicates that repeated low-level exposures, frequently without visible smoke or persistent odour, represent a credible occupational risk. EurECCA notes with concern that chronic exposure is rarely, if ever, specifically assessed within routine aeromedical or occupational health surveillance programmes. Unlike other recognized aviation occupational risks, such as cosmic radiation exposure, there are currently no harmonized European medical surveillance protocols specifically addressing potential long-term exposure to cabin air contaminants.

Flight safety and human performance

Cabin air contamination represents a flight safety concern. Acute neurological and physiological symptoms may affect human performance, situational awareness, and safety margins.

Contaminated air scenarios must therefore be explicitly integrated into:

- Safety Management Systems (SMS)
- Mandatory occurrence reporting frameworks
- Operational risk evaluation and human performance models
- Preventive safety policies addressing both acute and cumulative exposure risks



Engineering and collective protective measures

Given the persistent and recurrent nature of contaminated air events, EurECCA stresses that primary prevention through collective and engineering controls must remain the priority.

EurECCA demands:

- Real-time **contaminated air detection** and **warning systems**
- Engineering controls **reducing contamination at source**
- **Preventive** design and filtration technologies
- Harmonized **EU reporting** and transparency **standards**

1. Education, training and awareness

Standardized education and recurrent training consistent with ICAO Circular 344 must become a mandatory European requirement.

2. Protective Breathing Equipment (PBE)

PBEs are designed to protect the air crew members from smoke, carbon dioxide and other harmful gases, thus making them useful in events of possible cabin air contamination. Recently some concerns have been raised about the risks associated with its usage. A thorough assessment of the recommendations laid out in [EASA SIB No. 2025-04](#) should be conducted, and a more realistic training environment should be created for air crew members, regarding the usage of PBE in fire, smoke and fume events.

3. Clinical protocols and medical management

Validated and standardized clinical protocols, including structured follow-up pathways near major airports, are necessary.

4. Insurance and Social Protection

EU-wide compulsory insurance protection must include binding minimum coverage thresholds and harmonized compensation standards.

EurECCA highlights key regulatory gaps:

- Absence of mandatory detection systems
- Insufficient recognition of cumulative exposure
- Fragmented reporting standards
- PBE limitations
- Lack of validated medical pathways
- No EU-wide minimum insurance standards



Cabin air contamination is not a theoretical or emerging issue. It is an operational reality reported by aircrew across Europe.

European regulatory frameworks must respond proportionately, ensuring that prevention, detection, medical management, and protection measures reflect the lived experience of aircrew and the shared safety environment of crew and passengers.

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 50.000 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.

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