



ECA
Piloting Safety

PRESS RELEASE

Pilots step up the fight against Single Pilot flights with an ad campaign in Brussels Airport bathrooms

Brussels, 18 July 2024 – With aircraft manufacturers and airlines pushing for flights with only one pilot at the controls, the [European Cockpit Association](#) (ECA) is spreading awareness with a new advertisement series in the Brussels-Zaventem Airport, Belgium. The ads will be displayed in airport bathrooms between 20 and 27 July. A part of the [OneMeansNone](#) campaign, they warn passengers about the safety risks of reducing crew numbers.

Captain Otjan de Bruijn, ECA President, said: *“We hope this campaign is a conversation starter, showing in a graphic way just why we need at least two pilots in the cockpit. Faced with the prospect of Reduced Crew Operations, both pilots and the passengers are obviously on the side of safety. A plane has multiple backups – two engines, two generators – for a reason. One pilot is simply not enough to address emergencies and ensure that all flight aspects are in order. We cannot let airlines’ commercial interests get in the way of passenger safety.”*

Currently, regulatory and industry standards mandate the necessity of having two pilots at the controls of a large commercial plane. However, manufacturers such as Airbus and Dassault are actively pursuing the elimination of one pilot from the flight deck during the cruise phase. This proposal, also known as [“extended Minimum Crew Operations” \(eMCO\)](#), is being evaluated by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). Its approval would lead to significantly diminished flight safety, with one pilot leaving the flight deck for several hours during the cruise phase, while the other remains at the controls.

ECA and thousands of pilots worldwide are advocating against this proposal. Two pilots in the cockpit are essential for the safety of the 200-400 people on board. They serve as mutual support and back-up for each other, cross-checking and managing complex tasks, as well as emergencies. While technological developments and automation have improved flight safety and efficiency, they are not failure-proof. Replacing pilots with automation could possibly increase aviation manufacturers’ profits, but it will not make flights any cheaper or safer for passengers.

Pilots continue to fight for flight safety through national actions. There is a global movement against Reduced Crew Operations, supported by [European Pilots](#), the [International Federation of Air Line Pilots’ Associations](#) and the biggest Pilot union in the US – [Air Line Pilots Association](#). This campaign is bolstered by successful national efforts, such as a [petition in the Netherlands](#), and demonstrations at airports in [France](#) and [Italy](#), as well as other national initiatives.

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Note to editors: ECA is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 40.000 pilots from across Europe, striving for the highest levels of aviation safety and fostering social rights and quality employment for pilots in Europe.