



Aeromedical, Aviation Psychological & Pilot Associations Join Forces to facilitate Pilot Medical Fitness

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In a joint initiative to strengthen the relationship between aviation medical examiners and pilots, the European associations ESAM, EAAP and ECA have issued today their joint approach to medical and mental fitness assessments of pilots. It endorses a key set of guidelines developed by the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA). This step constitutes a milestone in strengthening aeromedical assessments, taking into account the increasing relevance of psychosocial stressors, mental health aspects, and the changing working environment that pilots are exposed to.

In their [Joint Statement](#), the three organisations stress that safe pilot performance during an entire career should be the common aim of professional pilots, aeromedical and aviation psychological specialists, airline managers, and authorities alike.

"As part of the ESAM 'Fly Safe, Fly Well' project, which seeks to strengthen the role of prevention in aeromedical assessments, particularly in the psychosocial aspects of pilot's health, we felt the need to work together with aviation psychologists and pilots," says Kevin Herbert, President of the European Society of Aerospace Medicine. "As a result, we have worked with colleagues from ECA and EAAP, and I am delighted that we have forged an excellent working relationship. Together we will be publishing an information leaflet for Pilots and Aviation Medical Examiners, as what we think is an important step in enhancing the trust and co-operation between them. Another result is our joint endorsement of the Aerospace Medical Association's mental health working group recommendations. On behalf of ESAM, I look forward to future collaboration in the interests of flight safety."

"Health and mental fitness issues may arise during the career of a professional pilot," says André Droog, President of the European Association for Aviation Psychology, EAAP. "When happening, recognition and acceptance are the first steps in solving them. Any raising of such issues or request for assistance by the pilot should be taken seriously and be positively appreciated and reacted upon by the pilot's environment, e.g., the airline management, the company's occupational health service, peers, regulators, and aeromedical examiners. Aviation psychologists can help in many regards to regain full mental fitness," says Droog.

"High workload, pilot fatigue, and 'atypical' employment forms, like 'zero-hours contracts', self-employment or temporary contracts, become more common in our industry and put a lot of pressure on pilots, both physically and mentally," says Capt. Dirk Polloczek, President of the European Cockpit Association, ECA. "It is therefore important that pilots can have trust in their aeromedical examiner; to allow them to openly share also issues that go beyond the purely physical demands of their job. To do so, maintaining the confidentiality of medical information is crucial. Also, the examiner should be aware of pilot Peer Support Programmes, which have proven successful in addressing health-related issues, while minimising career jeopardy and the possible stigma of seeking assistance," says Polloczek.

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