



3 ORGANISATIONS STRESS IMPORTANCE OF PILOT MENTAL HEALTH FITNESS

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To strengthen the relationship between aviation medical examiners and **pilots**, the European Society of Aerospace Medicine, European Association for Aviation Psychology (EAAP) and European Cockpit Association (ECA) unveiled a joint approach to medical and **mental** fitness assessments of pilots. It endorses a key set of guidelines developed by the Aerospace Medical Association, taking into account the increasing relevance of psychosocial stressors, **mental health** aspects and the ever-changing working environment.

In a joint statement, the three organizations stressed that safe pilot performance during an entire career should be the “common aim” of professional pilots, aeromedical and aviation psychological specialists, aviation managers and authorities. The statement particularly addresses pilot mental health, a topic that historically has been largely avoided by the aviation community.

“Health and mental fitness issues might arise during the career of a professional pilot,” said EAAP

president André Droog. “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, such as management, health service providers, peers, regulators and aeromedical examiners. Aviation psychologists can help in many regards to regain full mental fitness.”

ECA president Dirk Polloczek said it is important that pilots 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.” He also noted that examiners should be aware of pilot peer support programs, “which have proven successful in addressing health-related issues while minimizing career jeopardy and the possible stigma of seeking assistance.”

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