

Brussels, 22 March 2006

## European sky protected against unsafe airlines

***The European Commission has today adopted the first EU list of airlines which are banned in the European Union<sup>1</sup>. This black list of unsafe airlines will now be published on the Commission's website. The black list has been compiled on the basis of national contributions and after an in-depth analysis with Member State experts. The list consists of 92 companies which face a complete ban and 3 companies which face operational restrictions. From now on the principle will apply that companies banned in one Member State are banned in the whole EU.***

*"The European Union now has a coherent approach to banning airlines", said Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the Commission responsible for transport. "This black list will keep dubious airlines out of Europe. It will also make sure that all airlines operating in Europe's sky meet the highest safety standards".*

The adoption by the Commission follows from the unanimous opinion of the Aviation Safety Committee of Member State experts on 15 March 2006. This first EU black list of unsafe airlines is based on regulation (EC) No 2111/2005<sup>2</sup> which came into force on 16 January. Member States have informed the Commission since then of any flight bans or operating restrictions in their territory and of the reasons for such bans. The Commission invited all the airlines concerned to express their points of view and contacted the civil aviation authorities responsible for their regulatory oversight. Some airlines submitted their comments in writing, while others presented them orally to the Commission and to the Aviation Safety Committee.

Bans and operational restrictions are only imposed based on evidence of violation of objective and transparent criteria which are published in the above mentioned regulation. These criteria focus on the results of checks carried out in European airports; the use of poorly maintained, antiquated or obsolete aircraft; the inability of the airlines to rectify shortcomings identified during inspections; and the inability of the authority responsible for overseeing an airline to perform its task properly.

Member States reported that five countries have an inadequate system for regulatory oversight. One important consequence of the black list will be to root out the practice of flags of convenience whereby some countries issue Air Operation Certificates to dubious airline companies.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/air/safety/doc/flywell/2006\\_03\\_22\\_flywell\\_list\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/air/safety/doc/flywell/2006_03_22_flywell_list_en.pdf),  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/air/safety/flywell\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/air/safety/flywell_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 344, 27.12.2005, p.15

([http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l\\_344/l\\_34420051227en00150022.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l_344/l_34420051227en00150022.pdf))

The Commission also intends to continue with technical assistance programmes for third country civil aviation authorities. The black list will help focussing cooperation programmes on countries that are willing to meet international safety standards but lack necessary resources. Over the past five years the Commission has spent almost €80 million on such programmes.

The bans that are now imposed throughout the EU concern both passenger flights and cargo companies. Today's Commission decision also imposes operational restrictions on three companies which can no longer fly into the EU with specified types of aircraft.

The European black list will have a real impact on aviation safety in the European Union. In addition to its punitive effect the black list will encourage all airlines operating in Europe to comply fully with safety standards and will dissuade unscrupulous airlines from starting up services in Europe. It will avoid discrepancies between national flight bans and restrictions. Through its wide publication the list will have an impact world-wide. The Commission advises people to avoid travelling with these airlines in other parts of the world.

Today's black list is a first step. The list will be updated as often as is necessary and at least every three months. The Commission has today also adopted the rules for updating the list. If an airline feels that it should be taken off the list because it again complies with safety standards, it should contact the Commission or a Member State. The Committee of Aviation Safety experts will assess the evidence provided by the airline or its supervisory authority. The Commission will take its final decision based on the Committee's opinion.

The same procedure applies if an airline should be added to the list. Herein, the Commission can act at the request of a Member State or on its own initiative, a right which it did not have for drawing up the first list which is based exclusively on national contributions. The Commission will act upon information gathered by its own services, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), Member States or the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

#### *Note*

*In addition to the black list the Commission has also recently proposed to extend the role of EASA ([IP/05/1422](#)). That proposal contains the provision for an ex ante certification of compliance of third country operators with essential requirements for operating aircrafts in the EU. No EU Member State currently issues certificates for third country operators. The Commission calls upon Council and European Parliament to approve this proposal.*

[MEMO/06/127](#): Questions and answers on aviation blacklist

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/air/safety/doc/flywell/2006\\_03\\_22\\_flywell\\_list\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/air/safety/doc/flywell/2006_03_22_flywell_list_en.pdf)