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COMMISSION OPINION

on the work programme of the European Aviation Safety Agency for 2008

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1592/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2002 on common rules in the field of civil aviation and establishing a European Aviation Safety Agency, and in particular Article 24(2)(c) thereof,

HAS ADOPTED THIS OPINION:

The Commission welcomes the 2008 Agency's draft work programme and recognises that the planned activities and actions are in accordance with the tasks entrusted to the Agency by Regulation (EC) No 1592/2002 with the aim of ensuring a high and uniform level of civil aviation protection of the European citizens at all times.

This is the first priority of the well established Community policy in the field of aviation safety. In this context, the Commission wishes to place particular emphasis on the following tasks to be conducted by the Agency in 2008, without prejudice to other tasks conferred upon it by Regulation (EC) No 1592/2002:

- The Commission wishes to recall that the Agency has to assist the Commission in monitoring the application of Regulation (EC) No 1592/2002 and its implementing rules by conducting standardisation inspections of Member States competent authorities. The Commission expects that the Agency will devote all necessary resources to this highest priority. In this respect, the Commission considers that the standardisation inspections shall be conducted to the maximum possible extent by the Agency's personnel.
- The Commission expects more assistance from the Agency for the update of the Community list of air carriers subject to an operating ban within the Community, by participating in on site visits, conducting ad hoc analysis of SAFA (Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft) ramp inspection reports and in general providing any information that may lead to an update of the list, as foreseen in article 4.3 of EC Regulation 2111/2005¹.
- The Agency has to provide the Commission with the technical and scientific support needed to carry out its tasks, including in the framework of its international action in the field of civil aviation. In particular, the Commission expects that the Agency will be active in supporting its technical cooperation action in Africa.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 2111/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2005 on the establishment of a Community list of air carriers subject to an operating ban within the Community and on informing air transport passengers of the identity of the operating air carrier, and repealing Article 9 of Directive 2004/36/EC

- The Agency has to assist Member States and the industry in implementing Community legislation. In this respect, the Commission expects that the Agency will play a greater role in disseminating best practices among the competent administrations of the Member States and third countries.
- In order to ensure that the Agency grows as an efficient organisation, a special effort shall be made to establish and implement the performance indicators referred to in article 5.5 of Commission Regulation N° 593/2007 of 31 May 2007 on the fees and charges levied by the European Aviation Safety Agency. Furthermore, special attention has to be paid to the proper implementation of the recommendations stemming from the various audits carried out on the Agency, as well as to the preparation and entry into force of the "Enterprise Resource Planning". A careful analysis of the outcome of the study on the evaluation of the implementation of Regulation 1592/2002 (article 51) will have to be carried out in order to assess which recommendations might be implemented to enhance the efficiency of the Agency.
- The Agency should accelerate the works aimed at extending the scope of Regulation 1592/2002 to airports and air traffic management, in order to provide the Commission with an opinion on both topics in the beginning of 2008.

The Agency is therefore requested to carry out the tasks entrusted to it, ensuring optimum coordination and collaborating closely with the relevant Commission departments working towards the development and safety of civil aviation.

This opinion is addressed to the Chairman of the Management Board of the European Aviation Safety Agency, Post Box 10 12 53 - DE 50452 - Cologne.

Annex: Work programme of the European Aviation Safety Agency for 2008.