European Union Aviation Safety Agency

FAQ n.45819

FAQs:

Language proficiency , Cabin Crew, Aircrew, Regulations

Question:

Is there any requirement on cabin crew member(s) communication with passengers in a certain language?

Answer:

Reference: Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 Air Operations, Annex III (Part-ORO) and Annex IV (Part-CAT) is available on EASA website.

There is no EU (or ICAO requirement) that cabin crew members must speak English. It is a general practice that cabin crew members do speak English to facilitate the communication in the aviation industry. The operator defines what languages its cabin crew members must be able to speak and at what level.

Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 specifies the following two requirements:

- The operator shall ensure that all personnel are able to understand the language in which those parts of the Operations Manual, which pertain to their duties and responsibilities, are written (ORO.MLR.100(k)), and
- The operator shall ensure that all crew members can communicate with each other in a common language (CAT.GEN.MPA.120).
  There is no EU (or ICAO) requirement for a specific language regarding cabin crew communication with passengers. It must be noted that it is difficult, if not impossible, to mandate the ‘required’ languages to be used on board with regard to communication with passengers, as this differs on daily basis from a flight to flight. For example, a German airline has a flight departing from Frankfurt to Madrid and it is assumed that the cabin crew members speak German since they work for a German operator. In addition, they may speak English if the operator selected this language as a criterion. The passenger profile may, however, be such that these languages are not ‘desired’ on this flight as passengers do not necessarily speak or understand any of the two languages (passengers may be e.g. Russian, Chinese, Iranian, Indian, Pakistani, Polish, Finnish, Croatian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Czech, Slovak, etc., or there is a large group of e.g. Japanese tourists).

Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 mandates the operator to ensure that briefings and demonstrations related to safety are provided to passengers in a form that facilitates the application of the procedures applicable in case of an emergency and that passengers are provided with a safety briefing card on which picture type-instructions indicate the operation of emergency equipment and exits likely to be used by passengers. It is therefore the operator's responsibility to choose the languages to be used on its flights, which may vary depending on the destination or a known passenger profile. It is also a practice of some operators to employ 'language speakers', i.e. cabin crew members speaking certain languages, who mainly operate their language-desired route(s).

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Link:

https://www.easa.europa.eu/en/faq/45819