

Subject: Risks Emerging During Ramp-up of Aviation Activities**Ref. Publications:**

- Commission Regulation (EU) [2018/1139](#) dated 04 July 2018.
- Commission Regulation (EU) [139/2014](#) dated 12 February 2014.
- Commission Regulation (EU) [376/2014](#) dated 03 April 2014.
- Commission Regulation (EU) [965/2012](#) dated 05 October 2012.

Applicability:

National Competent Authorities (NCA), aerodrome operators, air operators.

Description:

After two years of severe traffic reductions due to COVID-19, the aviation industry in Europe is experiencing a vigorous recovery. Traffic levels are approaching those of 2019 and the load factors, especially on intra-European flights, are high. The speedy recovery has left many airports and air operators facing significant challenges as regards the provision of ground services (e.g. passenger and baggage handling, aircraft servicing, security checks, etc.), leading to substantial disruptions and negatively affecting both aerodrome and air operations.

While the root cause for those difficulties could be linked to the availability of sufficient, qualified work force, EASA is concerned about potential safety risks emerging from, or amplified by, the above-mentioned challenges. Furthermore, difficulties regarding the provision of services at aerodromes may result in prolonged flight delays and cancellations. These in turn may lead to increased levels of crew fatigue.

Although currently there are no immediate significant safety or security concerns related to the shortage of qualified workforce, EASA is issuing this SIB to provide recommendations to mitigate the negative impacts on the overall efficiency and reliability of the aviation system, as well as potential latent safety and security risks.

At this time, the safety concern described in this SIB is not considered to be an unsafe condition that would warrant Safety Directive (SD) action under Commission Regulation (EU) [965/2012](#), Annex II, ARO.GEN.135(c), or under Commission Regulation (EU) [139/2014](#), Annex II, ADR.AR.A.040.

Recommendation(s):

Air operators and aerodrome operators, which fall under the scope of Commission Regulation (EU) 2018/1139, and NCA are recommended to consider the following actions, if applicable:

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1. Collaboration

- 1.1. Aerodrome operators should increase collaboration with groundhandling service providers, air operators, security services providers and State agencies, to ensure the best use of all available human resources and aerodrome infrastructure.
- 1.2. Aerodrome operators should apply a collaborative decision making process with the relevant aerodrome stakeholders based on actual operational information, to identify any emerging operational or capacity issues due to staff shortage, and implement actions to mitigate the impacts. Local Runway Safety Teams, Airport Security and/or Facilitation Committees and Apron Safety Committees may increase collaboration and monitoring.
- 1.3. NCAs should collaborate with relevant State's entities and other responsible authorities, e.g. regarding cooperation on aviation security.

2. Occurrence Reporting and Safety Risk Management

- 2.1. Under the safety risk management process, aerodromes' and air operators should conduct a specific risk assessment to identify the areas which are more vulnerable to safety risks due to the current disruptions, e.g. changes to levels of occurrence reporting, to assess the effectiveness of mitigations in place and determine the need for additional or alternative action(s).
- 2.2. All stakeholders should emphasise, at all levels, the importance of fostering a positive safety culture encouraging the staff to report occurrences with confidence, which is one of the cornerstones of a well-functioning safety risk management process.
- 2.3. All stakeholders should, based on the results of the safety risk assessment, strengthen monitoring in the identified risk areas and in the resulting level of safety and take appropriate mitigating measures. Operational supervision of activities can support the adherence to standards and the quick resolution of potentially challenging situations.

3. Administrative Procedures

- 3.1. Whenever possible and in the remit of aerodromes' responsibilities, expedite administrative processes, such as the issuance of airport identification cards and ensure communication and coordination across the aerodrome system.

4. Flight Time Limitations

- 4.1. Air operators should take into account operational disruptions at aerodromes with known high proportion of delay issues (e.g. time needed for crew security check, taxiing, longer turnaround time), when planning crew monthly rosters.
- 4.2. Air operators should consider the exercise of commander's discretion as exceptional. Extension of flight duty period when operating to and from aerodromes with a known high proportion of delays to traffic should be kept to a minimum since this delay cannot be considered as 'unforeseen circumstances'. Furthermore any crew scheduling, which includes the commander's discretion is not acceptable and the planning with extensions should be limited. Moreover, commander's discretion should be avoided at homebase and/or air operators' hubs, where standby or reserve crew members should be available.
- 4.3. NCA should prioritize oversight activities focusing on the implementation of Subpart Flight Time Limitations of Annex III (PART-ORO of Commission Regulation (EU) [965/2012](#)). NCA should monitor how air operators are planning flight duty periods and, in particular, how air operators ensure that crew members remain sufficiently free from fatigue in order to

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operate at a satisfactory safety level under all circumstances; this SIB should be considered in the course of NCA risk based oversight planning.

5. EASA Guidance Material

5.1. All stakeholders should consider relevant EASA guidance material and safety information bulletins, notably SIB [2020-13](#) and SIB [2020-07R2](#), as well as the review of Aviation Safety Issues Arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic from 30 April 2021, and all other EASA guidance material, which was published during COVID-19 pandemic and are relevant to the current summer disruption situation. Furthermore, consider also the [safety promotion material on the EASA Air Ops Community](#) developed as part of the Stronger, Safer, Together Campaign.

Contact(s):

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