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Mr. Wim Ovaa
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ASSIGNED

Ostend, June 6th 2007

Concerning: Airworthiness AN-12 aircraft

Dear sir,

Since the beginning of the month of June 2007 a number of old Antonov 12 (AN12) aircraft are operating at Ostend-Bruges Airport again. They are being used as freighters for the transport of fish from Iceland to Ostend on a regular basis of 3 to 4 flights per week (1). As you know these type of aging aircraft are not only very noisy but also producing an unbelievable amount of smoke and fumes.

Apart from the smoke and the noise we are very worried about the safety of the planes. The one who landed on the 5th of June '07 at 21:21 hrs - flight number AMA3746 - was registered as UN-11012. This plane appears to be the ex-Bulgarian LZ-SFR which was on the breach of being put on the EU blacklist and was only saved from it by a political compromise as Bulgaria became member of the EU (2). Bulgaria promised to keep this plane out of the EU!

Now we see this unsafe AN12 reappearing at Ostend-Bruges Airport, this time registered as part of a Kazakhstan construction (to avoid the Bulgarian ban?). Apparently the plane belongs to the company ATMA, Atyrau Airport & Transport, Kazakhstan, (founded in 2004), the same company that lost a AN12 in a crash in Kabul (Afghanistan) on the 25th of April 2005.

The Icelandic fish transport is organised by a recently founded fish export company "Samherji hf" in Akureyri, Iceland. Samherji hf formed an air freight company "Norðanflug ehf" with partners "Eimskipafélag Íslands hf" and "SAGA Fjárfestingar ehf".

Could you inform us whether the AN12 planes in general and the ATMA ones in particular are fully complying with all safety requirements in the EU? Could you tell us if SAFA inspections regularly take place on these planes. When were they last inspected and what were the results?

Could you also inform us why such old, noisy and polluting planes are still allowed to operate, especially for regular freight transport within the European Union?

As European civilians we very much would appreciate your expertise.

Yours faithfully
For vzw WILOO

Jacques Denecker
President

(1) <http://www.nieuwsblad.be/Article/Detail.aspx?ArticleID=601D29KJ&PostCode=8400>

(2) <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/278&format=HTML&aged=0&language=NL&guiLanguage=en#fnB2>

(3) <http://aviation-safety.net/news/newsitem.php?id=1782>