



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Cabinet of Vice-President Siim Kallas
Member of Cabinet

19 MARS 2010

Brussels,
MR/hm D(2010)174

Mr. Jacques Denecker

E-mail: jacques.denecker@wiloo.be

Subject: Air safety in Belgium and Europe / operations by very old freighters

Dear Mr. Denecker,

Thank you for your e-mail dated 10 February whereby you report concerns regarding operations in Belgium and Europe of old freighter aircraft operated by third country carriers, in particular Meridian Airways certified in Ghana and Avient Aviation certified in Zimbabwe.

The safety of European citizens is of paramount importance. With this in mind, the EU has established in 2002 common aviation safety rules together with an independent European Aviation Safety Agency¹. These rules were amended in 2008² by the legislator in order to provide for the approval by the Agency of aircraft operated by Third Country carriers. The Commission, with the assistance of the Agency, is now working on implementing rules in this field in order to allow for such approvals to be issued by the Agency in the future. I believe that this regulation will contribute to ensuring a high and uniform level of safety in the EU.

Until such time, please note that the approval of third country carriers remains within the remit of each Member State. For this reason, my services have informed the competent authorities of Belgium who may provide separately their views on the issues you raise.

Regarding the specific cases of Air Charter Express / Meridian Airways certified in Ghana and Avient Aviation certified in Zimbabwe I would like to inform you that the Member States have carried out several ramp checks on aircraft operated by these carriers in the framework of the European SAFA programme. These reports are regularly analysed by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the results of the information from this analysis together with any other information relevant for safety

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1592/2002 of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 July 2002

² Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 February 2008

examined in the Air Safety Committee to decide whether action is needed in the framework of Regulation (EC) No 2111/2005 in order to form a ban of all or part of the operations of these carriers from the European airspace³. In the case you mention, the Commission has entered into consultations with the competent authorities responsible for the oversight of the said carriers on the basis of the available results of the SAFA analysis.

In the course of these consultations, the competent authorities of Ghana and Zimbabwe have been cooperative and responded promptly to the requests for information. These consultations are on-going and, if it becomes clear there is a significant safety issue that requires intervention, I would like to reassure you that the Commission will act.

Yours sincerely,



Margus RAHUOJA

Cc: Mr. Patrick Goudou, EASA

³ Regulation (EC) No 2111/2005 of the European Parliament and the Council of 14 December 2005