

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004211/25
to the Commission**

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(25 October 2025)

Subject: Safety of European airports following several incidents involving African airlines

On 21 September 2025, an aircraft belonging to a Tunisian airline nearly collided with another aircraft ⁽¹⁾. In August, an Air Algérie aircraft attempted to land at the wrong airport in Toulouse ⁽²⁾. The pilot mistakenly attempted to land at a military airport. Incidents like these could easily end in tragedy ⁽³⁾.

After long periods of lockdown that led to aircraft being grounded, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) warned of the need for pilots to undergo retraining ⁽⁴⁾. While European airlines appear to have rigorously implemented this measure, African airlines have been involved in several incidents of negligence or incompetence on EU territory.

In this regard, does the Commission intend to:

1. Encourage EASA to mandate that pilots from non-European airlines must undergo retraining following the lockdowns?
2. Encourage EASA to step up landing safety procedures for aircraft from non-European airlines landing at European airports?
3. Clarify the aviation safety requirements for third-country airlines under the Single European Sky scheme, which aims to make European airspace safer?

Supporters ⁽⁵⁾

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Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(5 January 2026)

Operational safety standards for international aviation (including on aircrew) are defined by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and its Convention on International Civil Aviation (also known as the Chicago Convention).

ICAO verifies that these standards are respected by its 193 signatory States, including States in Africa. In addition, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), in the context of the Third Country Operator (TCO) authorisations that it issues (in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 452/2014 ⁽¹⁾), verifies that third-country airlines comply with the applicable ICAO standards before they are allowed to operate in the EU's airspace. In line with the ICAO-system, airlines that respect ICAO rules can operate freely across borders.

Any third country operator that, for safety reasons in terms of non-compliance with international safety standards, is not issued a TCO authorisation or has an existing one revoked, will eventually be included in the EU Air Safety List of air carriers subject to an operating ban within the Union.

The flights that are referred to in the written question were subject to this oversight system. There are no indications that the issues raised by the Honourable Members stem from a lack of respect of existing rules or that the rate of occurrences would be abnormal.

The Single European Sky deals with air traffic management and does not impose operational safety requirements on third-country airlines.

¹ 'Collision between two aircraft narrowly avoided in Nice: how could such an incident occur?', *Le Parisien*, 23 September 2025, <https://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/collision-entre-deux-avions-evitee-de-justesse-a-nice-une-erreur-de-piste-possible-selon-un-rapport-preliminaire-23-10-2025-245LZMSL2ZFDBAC5O4PWVVLSDS.php#>

² 'Toulouse: Boeing pilot mixes up airports and tries to land at Franczal rather than Blagnac', *actu.fr*, 12 August 2025, https://actu.fr/occitanie/toulouse_31555/toulouse-le-pilote-du-boeing-se-trompe-d-aeroport-et-tente-d-atterrir-a-franczal-plutot-qu-a-blagnac_63030034.html

³ In the cases cited, such a tragedy was averted thanks to the quick thinking of French ground staff (in Toulouse) and European pilots (in Nice).

⁴ Air safety statistics in the EU, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Air_safety_statistics_in_the_EU

⁵ This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Jean-Paul Garraud (Pfe), Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR).

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/452/oj/eng>.