



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday 17 May 2021

GCAQE concerns about the current CEN aircraft cabin air quality standardisation work (pr EN 17436)

London, England.

The Global Cabin Air Quality Executive, representing aircrew who work in or travel on aircraft, expresses serious concerns about the direction that the current European standardisation work on aircraft cabin air quality is taking.

The GCAQE, founded in 2006 to specifically address the well documented problem of aircraft cabin air contamination, has taken a leading role in the development of the CEN prEN 17436 "Cabin air quality on civil aircraft - Chemical compounds".

The GCAQE has supported this work as it is clear that mitigating strategies must be urgently undertaken in order to supply aircrew and passengers cleaner breathing air, rather than the current method of taking air directly off the engines or auxiliary power unit unfiltered, a process known as 'bleed air'.

However, it has become very clear that the industry and some key consumer groups within Europe (see: <https://www.gcaqe.org/gcaqe-response-to-anec-may-2021>) appear to be undermining the work undertaken in order to delay or eliminate the need for the standard to be published.

Tristan Lorraine, the Spokesperson for the GCAQE commented:

"There is a very clear attempt by industry and some other groups representing consumers to prevent the standard, currently under public inquiry, from going forward. It is clear that these organisations are not taking into account the vast amount of evidence supporting that there is a genuine problem that needs solutions implemented now."

What I find very surprising is that I am yet to meet a consumer who would not want the issues of contaminated air in aircraft to be resolved now."

The GCAQE calls upon the industry, consumer groups for standardisation, the regulator (EASA) and CEN to support the need for the current draft standard to be implemented, as a way to better protect the health, safety and welfare of the travelling public and aircrew. This in turn would also be a great benefit to the aviation industry as a whole.

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Notes to editors:

- The GCAQE recently started a global multi lingual 'clean air campaign', with short videos available at: <https://www.gcaqe.org/cleanair>.
- Cabin breathing air on all aircraft apart from the Boeing 787 is taken directly from the engines and provided unfiltered to the aircraft. This is known as 'Bleed Air'.
- Bleed air is known to become contaminated with engine oils and/or hydraulic fluids. These are hazardous especially to the unborn.
- Contaminated bleed air events have been recognised as occurring since the 1950s.
- No aircraft currently flying has any form of detection system fitted to warn when these events occur.
- Flight safety is being compromised by contaminated air events.
- Crew and passengers have been reporting short and long-term health effects as a consequence of exposure to contaminated air.
- Contaminated air events are not rare and known to be under reported.
- Passengers are never told about the risks or these exposures.
- The aviation industry has and continues to fail to adequately address this issue.
- A recent US ruling supporting that contaminated cabin air is a health and flight safety issue can be seen here: (<https://perma.cc/98B9-34JY>). This US ruling comes 10 years after the High Court of Australia upheld a ruling that inhaling heated engine oil fumes were harmful (Joanne Turner case) and twenty-one years after the Compensation Court of New South Wales in Australia ruled, on 28 April 1999 in the Alysia Chew case. Alysia Chew had flown for Ansett and East West Airlines and had been exposed to fumes on the BAe 146 between January 1992 and October 1993. The New South Wales Compensation Court reviewed her claim that she was: "exposed to fumes, toxic substances and other irritants whilst carrying out her duties as a flight attendant" and ruled she had: "Suffered injury arising out of and in the course of her employment".
- The GCAQE was established in 2006 and is the leading group in the world representing airline employees in relation to the issue of contaminated air on aircraft.