

To: EASA Safety Department

Against: Wizz Air Hungary Ltd.

(Registered seat: Laurus Offices, Kőér street 2/A, Building B, H-1103, Budapest, Hungary; registration number: 01-10-140174)

Aviation Safety Report

On behalf of our members, we hereby address you an aviation safety report related to malpractice carried out by Wizz Air Hungary. These issues deal with the discrimination of workers who have refused to **extend maximum FDP** with commander's discretion, work from **OFF days**, those who have taken **sick leave days**, and those who submitted **fatigue reports** or refused to carry out **disruptive schedules**.

This report does not focus on labor related issues or economic disputes between the parties, but the safety of flight operations as a direct result of the company malpractice for which EASA should be aware of, in the interest of crew and public safety. These actions endanger the public safety by forcing crew members to work sick or fatigued due to genuine fear from retaliation in the form of dismissal in violation of EASA ORO.FTL and goes against the social responsibility of any airline towards the public and its employees. Also, the new EU Whistleblower Protection Directive should already offer some sort of protection to all EU member countries, even though the deadline to meet the minimum standards provided was set to 17th December 2021.

We demand that EASA will carry out a Z Test (statistical evaluation) with a confidence level of 90% (p-value <0.10) regarding the presence of discrimination in the selection criteria for dismissing flight crew. Emphasis is to be put on sick leave days, refusals to extend maximum FDP under captain's discretion, refusals to work from OFF days, and fatigue reports or e-mails in response to exhausting rosters. There are very strong indicators that these were the main criteria in selecting which employees to fire and the rest of the crew are now genuinely scared to report sick regardless of legitimate fatigue or health issues. The crew is pressured to use commander's discretion routinely and to work exhausting schedules.

Wizz Air has recently dismissed 20% of their workforce, which according to them is due to the COVID19 crisis. The objective selection criteria for the recent dismissals are kept secret by Wizz Air.

The company insisted that solely the "performance" criterion was initially used in selecting the weakest performing employees for dismissal.

On **29th of June 2020**, CEO József Váradi elaborated via the company electronic portal, "Workplace", the following three (3) criteria that were used:

- performance or lack of technical skills to do their jobs,



- those who were not a **“cultural fit to Wizz Air”**,
- and those who were chosen to fulfill the numbers, .e.g. collateral damages.

Cabin crew in Wizz Air are graded based on their “performance” which is a combination of feedback from other cabin attendants, exams scores, and most notably their work motivation which, unofficially, takes into account the number of sick leave days, willingness to help from OFF days, extension of maximum FDP, and general company economic interests.

In Bulgaria and Romania, cabin crew is hired under temporary contracts before turning into permanent contracts with the intention of easily dismissing them.

While there is nothing unlawful about this practice, Wizz Air uses this as unethical and unlawful leverage not to continue the contracts of crew which have higher sick leave days or refusals to extend duty time and fly from rest days in violation of EASA ORO.FTL.

Wizz Air has a history of neglecting and discriminating employees. Back in 2014, Wizz Air has fired employees who formed a collective workers’ union and were sued successfully by the organization, winning and condemning Wizzair for discrimination charges even at the Romanian Supreme Court.

In a recent interview, Wizz Air CEO József Váradi reflected on the company’s business practices and boasted of its anti-union activities.

Speaking of creating new bases in Germany, he claimed that the company has “been keeping out unions everywhere. If the unions try to catch us and to kill us, we simply close the base and move on. That’s the beauty of being an airline with the diversity and flexibility we have in our network: We can simply move our aircraft to another place.”

Such announcement of anti-union actions would have you think that Wizz Air is free to do whatever they please in Europe, and never face any consequences. This proves the company’s mentality where officially they state that they follow the rules but unofficially they punish and discriminate employees who act unfavorably to their business model. These expectations of employees to work maximum hours or face consequences go against principles of ethics and safety.

Pilots in Wizz Air have no official grades or feedback other than fuel reports and the expectation to fly 900 hours a year, **every year**.

The general understanding is that the maximum allowed legal limits are always to be treated as the normal requirements and not as such limits. Based on our personal findings and those collected from other colleagues/members, it is obvious that many of the laid off employees are the ones that have an outstanding safety record and the only things that differentiate them from the rest was their refusal to extend maximum FDP, work from OFF days, and have voiced out concerns regarding disruptive and exhaustive rosters such as numerous consecutive morning duties and alternating night/morning duties.

The resulting “black lists” were then established by Base Captains and Regional Managers locally, who have decided to fire people, on “likes” and “dislikes”. As a result, many experienced pilots with considerable flight hours (quite often even more experienced than the base captains and regional managers), were dismissed despite their excellent records.

There are many pilots left employed with a truly concerning safety and performance record.

To top it up, Wizzair has started an aggressive recruitment campaign for several operational bases, soon after +1000 pilots and cabin crew were dismissed in the middle of the lockdown.



Following backlashes from the press and employees organizations, Wizzair has recently announced that it will be offering a "second chance" to the dismissed group of pilots, if they reapply through the company's recruitment system from scratch. The airline is claiming that the previous working relationship ended two months ago cannot supersede EASA regulations, quoting:

"Based on EASA regulations and the GDPR, all pilots applying for a new position within the airline, whether or not they were previously part of that airline, must go through the official recruitment process. Wizz Air's priority is hiring the best pilots, provided they pass the assessment and depending on the criteria set out during the recruitment process. Experienced pilots that worked at Wizz Air will have an advantage due to their high skills." @Wizzair PR

Numerous reports speak about fatigued Captains at work that attempt to "help" the company by working from OFF days after a long week of rotation. One pilot came back from the middle of his vacation to take a single flight. Another dismissed captain has also experienced First Officers complaining that they are fatigued after 7 days of rotation from accepting additional duties. Those pilots and cabin crew that have demonstrated eagerness to help are still employed despite lower performance criteria.

It is the responsibility of EASA to oversee that safety practices are upheld and to protect flight crew from discriminatory practices which affect the safety of the general public.

The atmosphere in the company is that of genuine fear of discrimination and persecution which leads to a reduction in the level of safety. This is a request from the majority of pilots and cabin crew to carry out an audit and punish the company if there is statistical correlation between dismissals and duty related circumstances. Such actions are unacceptable in the aviation sector and this should be used to deter all other airlines from carrying out similar malpractices.

We rely on the collaboration and expertise of your inspectors to deal with this important issue and we remain at your disposal for any further information, discussions or meetings.

Yours sincerely,

Mircea Constantin

Liana Yilmaz

President of FPU Romania

Vicepresident of FPU Romania

