

## **Airlink appoints independent expert to review safety**

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AIRLINK has appointed an independent expert to review the airline's safety processes and procedures following recent accidents and incidents involving the airline.

In a statement released by the airline, it said that it is cooperating with the South African Civil Aviation Authority's (SACAA) ongoing audit of the airline's operational, maintenance, training and recruiting procedures and processes.

The airline is also assisting the SACAA's air accident investigation unit, which is leading the probe into the most recent incident with an aircraft aquaplaning at George Airport.

The investigation will consider all of the circumstances surrounding the incident, including the weather, condition of the runway surface, the pilots' proficiency and the operational and service record of the aircraft.

"Safety and the well-being of our passengers, crew and aircraft is our top priority and it is essential that we always operate professionally and safely. While we are confident that Airlink complies with South African and international regulation and best practice, if there are gaps, then we want to know where they are and we will implement whatever measures are necessary to close them," said Airlink ceo and md, Rodger Foster.

## **EU implements new rights for rail passengers**

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PASSENGERS and their belongings are now protected when travelling by train within the European Union, under new rights implemented by the European Commission.

They protect travellers' basic rights and enforce a number of obligations on rail companies with relation to their responsibility towards passengers.

The new rights:

- Guarantee disabled people and people with reduced mobility non-discriminatory access to trains and assistance
- Strengthen rail passengers' right to compensation when their luggage is lost or damaged – approximately €1 285 per piece
- Strengthen rail passengers' right in case of death or injury through an advance payment to meet immediate needs. This advance payment amounts to at least €21 000 per passenger in the event of death
- Reinforce rail passengers' right to compensation in case their journey is delayed or cancelled; the minimum compensation amounts to 25% of the ticket price for delays between one and up to two hours and 50% of the ticket price for delays of two hours and more
- Give rail passengers the right to be informed comprehensively before and during their journey, for example about delays
- Make it easier for rail passengers to buy tickets

- Impose the obligation on rail companies and station managers to ensure passengers' personal security in railway stations and on trains
- Oblige rail companies to set up a complaint-handling mechanism for the rights and obligations covered by the new regulation
- Oblige member states to ensure that passengers can lodge a complaint to an independent body if passengers consider that their rights have not been correctly implemented
- Extend the existing rights of passengers under the Convention for the International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) which only covers international transport, in principle, to all domestic train services.

Member states, to have sufficient time to comply with the new rules, can request to not implement some of the new rules for up to 15 years for services limited to national territory.

## **Accommodation service launched for fans**

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Football fans wishing to travel to the 2010 FIFA World Cup next year can now book accommodation on the official tournament website FIFA.com.

MATCH has secured a total of 1 725 190 room nights for the event, 43% of which (741 832 room nights) in the 1 007 properties is reserved for the general public.

The accommodation service will enable fans to instantly search the available inventory and make bookings.

To book accommodation through the website, follow these steps:

- Visit the FIFA World Cup section on FIFA.com
- Click on 'Destination' and then on 'Accommodation'
- Enter the desired dates and location to view the available options and immediately book the accommodation of choice.

MATCH has also reached a service agreement with South African Airways and leased 20 aircraft for the duration of the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

These aircraft will provide 100 000 seats on scheduled domestic flights on match days during the month-long tournament. The domestic flights will help supporters to connect to smaller city destinations from their accommodation base. The domestic flights will fly to destinations such as Nelspruit, Mangaung/Bloemfontein, Polokwane and Nelson Mandela Bay/Port Elizabeth.

## **EK to launch daily Amsterdam flights**

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EMIRATES is to launch daily flights to Amsterdam, effective May 1.

The daily non-stop service will be operated with a combination of B777-200LR and B777-300ER aircraft in a three-class configuration.

This is the fourth new destination the airline has announced this year. Durban and Luanda were both launched in October and Tokyo was recently announced with a start date of March 28, 2010.

Flights will depart Dubai at 08h25, arriving in Amsterdam at 13h30 daily. The return service will depart Amsterdam at 15h30, arriving in Dubai at 23h59.

The new European service comes on the back of exclusive lounge openings in Düsseldorf, Hamburg and Manchester and extra frequencies to Rome, building up to a double daily in February.

During December, Emirates will take delivery of two further A380s, which will be deployed to Seoul from December 14 and Paris two weeks later.

The airline is also promising further new route announcements in the coming months, supported by continuing aircraft deliveries.