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ABSTRACT

Title: MEDICAL REASONS FOR DEFINITIVE UNFITNESS FOR WORK OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS AT EUROCONTROL	
Author(s) Name: Dr. Roland Vermeiren	
Affiliation: Head of EUROCONTROL Medical Service, President of ESAM	
<p>Introduction: There is no standardised information about definitive unfitness for work of ATCOs in Europe. EUROCONTROL has an international Upper Area Control Centre in Maastricht NL (MUAC), dealing with 1.5 million flights per year by 300 controllers from its 38 European Member States. Our data could give an indication of medical problems of ATCOs throughout Europe and help class 3 AMEs in their assessments.</p> <p>Methods: Medical assessments of ATCOs in Europe are based on the “Requirements for European Class 3 Medical Certification of ATCOs” issued by Eurocontrol in February 2006 and integrated in a European Directive, including specific training of class 3 AMEs and a specific chapter about psychological problems. At MUAC some special policies are in place regarding drug testing and pre-recruitment ophthalmological examination forms. All decisions regarding definitive unfitness on medical grounds are listed from 1989 until 2010, including the essential elements of the medical grounds, ranking the most frequent diagnoses. A comparison has been made with the 2,100 EUROCONTROL general staff members and data from other European providers.</p> <p>Results: The data show the importance of psychological and psychiatric grounds in the definitive unfitness of ATCOs, ahead of cardiovascular problems, but also a slighter lower rate of invalidity compared to other staff (1.1 per 300 ATCOs per year versus 1.4 per 300 general staff per year). Frequent ophthalmological reasons for unfitness of ab initios can be avoided by pre-recruitment examination.</p> <p>Conclusion: Psychological and psychiatric problems play a major role in the definitive unfitness of ATCOs, and special training for and attention from the class 3 AME should be focused on such problems.</p>	
Name and address for correspondence: Dr Roland Vermeiren, Raketstraat 96 B – 1130 Brussels, Belgium	
Telephone No.: +32 475 60 34 10	Fax No.: +32 2 729 91 07
E-mail: roland.vermeiren@eurocontrol.int	Date: 02/09/2010