



EUROPEAN UNION
Delegation of the European Union to
the Philippines

Press conference: Civil Aviation Authority – Cebu Pacific

Remarks

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General Hotchkiss, CEO Gokongwei, Captain Andrews, Excellencies, distinguished guests, members of the media, good evening to you all.

I believe this is turning into a red letter day for Philippine Civil Aviation and I am truly happy to be here to witness it.

Early last year an audit by the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) found that the CAAP had undertaken sufficient corrective actions to meet international air safety norms and removed all the remaining Significant Safety Concerns relating to the Philippines. These concerns were the original reason that the Airban had been imposed in the first place back in 2010.

Since then EU-Philippine relations in the field of civil aviation have been on a positive trajectory thanks to the hard work and dedication of many different people. I would like to recognise in particular General Hotchkiss and his staff here at the CAAP as well as the persons in positions of leadership and responsibility in the larger airlines - not least Mr. Gokongwei who is with us here this evening.

I would also like to acknowledge the goodwill in dealing with the Philippine dossier shown by my colleagues at European Commission Headquarters.

On the basis of consultations in Brussels and an on-site visit by the European Commission in June 2013 it became apparent that significant improvements could be identified in the safety and oversight procedures of the CAAP as well as Cebu Pacific and PAL. This opened the door to the first announcement of good news exactly nine months ago when Philippine Airlines was taken off the list of banned airlines allowing it to resume direct flights to the EU in November last year.

On that occasion the European Commission and the Air Safety Committee expressed their intention to continue to closely monitor the situation in view of conducting further reviews including for other Philippines air carriers.

To this end the EU Delegation has been facilitating a constant flow of information between the CAAP, Cebu Pacific and the European Commission.

On January 28 2014 representatives of CAAP and Cebu Pacific were invited to a technical meeting in Brussels to discuss in more detail safety actions and other relevant factors in relation to the runway excursion accident that occurred at Davao airport on June 2, 2013. Following this meeting the European Commission was kept abreast with a number of positive measures that were taken in this regard by both Cebu Pacific and the CAAP.

Then two weeks ago on March 26 CAAP and Cebu Pacific were again invited to Brussels by the Air Safety Committee that includes representatives of all the Member States of the European Union. There they presented evidence on the oversight exercised by CAAP on Cebu Pacific as well as the ability of Cebu Pacific Air to comply with relevant aviation safety regulations.

The Air Safety Committee made a unanimous recommendation on the basis of the evidence it heard. The recommendation was endorsed by the full College of European Commissioners that met just an hour or two ago in Brussels.

That leaves me with the great pleasure of announcing to you all that Cebu Pacific Air has been taken off the EU list of banned airlines.

On behalf of the European Union Delegation I would like to extend my congratulations to Cebu Pacific Air and to wholeheartedly welcome them to European skies.

And the good news does not end there. This latest move by the European Commission is in recognition of the sustained efforts of the Philippines to raise its standards in air safety not only with respect to the two larger airlines but across the board. For this reason I would like to inform you that the European Commission is likely to mount another EU assessment mission to the Philippines later in the year to assess Philippine Aviation as a whole including internal aviation with the prospect to lift the ban on Philippine aviation as a whole.

Thank you