

Pilots Association: Intelligence services knew that flying over Ukraine was dangerous

A small number of countries already knew about the risks of a missile attack over Eastern Ukraine before the 17th of July, but kept this information to themselves and only told their own airline companies, said Nico Voorbach, the chairman of the ECA, the European pilots association, to RTL Nieuws.

According to the [European Cockpit Association](#), airline companies in the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Australia were “warned of the fact that should they fly over this region, no matter at what altitude, their planes could be the target of acts of war.”

At high altitude

"It was about which anti-aircraft warfare or missiles were used by the separatists and other militants in the area and that there was a risk that these missiles could reach commercial airliners at high altitudes," Voorbach told the research team of RTL Nieuws.

According to Voorbach it was known that “they were in the hands of people who would use them against Ukrainian or Russian planes, and therefore also against other planes flying over, the so-called collateral damage.”

“It is about human lives”

According to the ECA this kind of information is not structurally shared with airline companies from other countries. “If this information had been known to them, not a single plane would have flown over this area.” This means that airline companies from other countries were unaware of these risks. According to the ECA, neither KLM nor Malaysia Airlines were apprised of this information. Voorbach feels this is outrageous. “Because this is not about intelligence or commercial interests, but about human lives.”

The ECA bases its claim not only on information from pilots within their own association, but also on contacts within intelligence services. The ECA wants a special organization to be appointed as soon as possible to gather information about risks worldwide and to share this information with all countries and airline companies.

No comment

The American intelligence service CIA and the American aviation authority FAA did

not want to react to ECA's claims. The Dutch National Coordinator for Counterterrorism said that the Dutch Safety Board will investigate all matters concerning the crash, including this claim. The Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service AIVD, could not yet react.