

INTERIM STATEMENT

Ref. AAIU-2013-21

Classification:	Accident
Level of investigation:	Full Safety Investigation
Date and hour:	19 October 2013 at 13:25 UTC
Aircraft:	Pilatus PC-6 airplane. The aircraft was registered in Belgium and held a Certificate of Airworthiness and a valid Airworthiness Review Certificate (ARC).
Type of engine:	One Pratt and Whitney Canada PT6A-27
Accident location:	Village of Gelbressée, 12,5 km East-Northeast of EBNM airfield
Type of flight:	Aerial Work – Parachute drop
Phase:	Climb
Persons on board:	10 parachutists and 1 pilot
Injuries:	11 fatal

The Air Accident Investigation Team AAIU(Be) was notified immediately and a team was sent to Gelbressée to start the safety investigation.

In the following days the safety investigation team was supported by:

- The Swiss Safety Investigation Authority (SUST),
- The Canadian Transportation Safety Board (TSB),
- The US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB),
- The French Bureau d'Enquête et Analyse (BEA)

The above authorities dispatched safety investigators and/or advisers who worked under the authority of the Air Accident Investigation Unit (Belgium).

The team was also supported by European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and members of the European Network of Civil Aviation Safety Investigation Authorities (ENCASIA) that procured valuable data to the safety investigators. The team also inquired similar accident investigations.

The team of safety investigators could also count on the active support of:

- The Belgian Army that provided support for the on-site search and removal of the wreckage.
- The Belgian Air Safety Directorate (ASD) that provided facilities for the storage and inspection of the wreckage as well as qualified investigators.
- The Belgian Civil Aviation Authority (BCAA) also known as la Direction Générale du Transport Aérien (DGTA) – Directoraat-generaal Luchtvaart (DGLV) provided advisers during the examination of the wreckage.

The safety investigation focused on the following aspects:

- Visual inspection of the accident site, localisation of all parts and pieces.
- Detailed examination of the wreckage, reconstitution of the airplane with all detached parts.
- Detailed examination of the flight controls (cables, surfaces)
- Disassembly, detailed examination and testing of the trim actuator and the related electrical circuits.
- Disassembly and detailed examination of the engine and propeller.
- Laboratory inspection of the fractures of the left wing and strut.
- Determination of the rupture sequence of the airplane structure.
- Examination of the airplane technical and maintenance documentation.
- Examination of radar data of the accident flight, as well as the previous flights.
- Examination of conversations between the airplane and the Air Traffic Control.
- Examination of the barometric data of the automatic parachute opening devices.
- Interview of key persons of the parachutist club, pilots and other witnesses.
- Gathering of meteorological data and bird activity reports in the area of the crash.

The Safety Investigation Report

The final report is not yet finalised within the first year after the accident occurred, but as stipulated by EU996/2010 Article 16:

If the final report cannot be made public within 12 months, the safety investigation authority shall release an interim statement at least at each anniversary of the accident or serious incident, detailing the progress of the investigation and any safety issues raised.

The report, when finalised in the near future, shall be circulated amongst:

- (a) Safety investigation authorities and civil aviation authorities of the States concerned, and the ICAO, according to the international standards and recommended practices;
- (b) Addressees of safety recommendations contained in the report;
- (c) The Commission and EASA,

The ICAO Annex 13 determines a delay of 60 days for the comments.

Safety Issue

Without prejudice to the outcome of the safety investigation, early after the accident, a review of the aviation legal requirements led to the conclusion that an improvement of the organizational framework of the flight operations involved in paradrops, as well as an improvement of the monitoring and surveillance of these activities were needed, both internally and by the competent authority of oversight.

Therefore, AAIU(Be) issued on January 2, 2014 the following safety recommendation to the BCAA (Belgian Civil Aviation Authority).

Considering the volume of the activity and the potential danger to the occupants of the aircrafts involved, AAIU(be) recommends BCAA to review the regulatory requirements pertaining to the activity of parachute droppings in order to increase the safety of this activity to an acceptable level, as well as adapting the level of oversight.

Note: If the safety investigation further reveals other safety issues, additional safety recommendations could be made.

The BCAA) reacted positively to the recommendation made and prepared a set of operating procedures for the purpose of helping the paraclubs to develop a Procedure Manual. These procedures were based on the future EASA Part SPO Regulation and documents from the UK CAA. The purpose was to draft the framework of the organisation desired for such activities.

BCAA concentrated on the flight operations of the new and re-starting paraclubs with the intent of generalising the requirements to all existing parachute club activities in Belgium when the new EASA Part-SPO will come into force.

BCAA took also the decision to apply the Part-SPO regulation in April 2015, 2 years before the ultimate date for implementation.

The new legal requirements introduced by Part-SPO, applicable to all parachute clubs of Belgium will be presented by BCAA by the end of 2014.

About this report

This interim report is released in accordance with Regulation (EU) no 996/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010.

It is not the purpose of the Air Accident Investigation Unit to apportion blame or liability. The sole objective of the investigation and the reports produced is the determination of the causes, and, where appropriate define recommendations in order to prevent future accidents and incidents.