# GERMANY PLANS SPOT DRUG TESTS ON PILOTS

**News / Airlines**

**Germany plans legislation requiring random drug and alcohol testing of pilots, hoping to reduce the risk of a repeat of the Germanwings crash in March.**

The plans follow the recommendation of a task-force set up by the Transport Ministry, after a pilot barricaded himself inside the cockpit of a plane operated by Germanwings and crashed it in the Alps, killing all 150 people on board.

Prosecutors have found evidence that the co-pilot, who had suffered severe depression and may have feared losing his job, had researched suicide methods and concealed an illness from his employer, sparking a debate on supervision and medical secrecy.

"I think it's sensible that pilots are checked on a random basis for the consumption of alcohol, drugs and medicines," Dobrindt told Bild am Sonntag. "Experts around the world see positive effects from this to boost operational safety in aviation."

Dobrindt said it was important airlines were given the responsibility to carry out the checks. The paper said Dobrindt plans to present the regulation to the cabinet in the new year.

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Yet Markus Wahl, a spokesman for German pilots' union Vereinigung Cockpit, was critical of the proposal.

"From our point of view the planned random tests are completely wrong. They have nothing to do with the Germanwings disaster and will put an entire professional group under general suspicion," Wahl was quoted by Bild am Sonntag as saying.

Germany's measures come after a panel of experts led by Europe's aviation safety regulator in July recommended improved psychological screening for new pilots, and called for the creation of a European database with details of medical visits plus better support networks to reduce the risks of a similar tragedy.

It also called for the introduction of random drug and alcohol testing of pilots and better oversight of the doctors responsible for their regular medical checks.

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