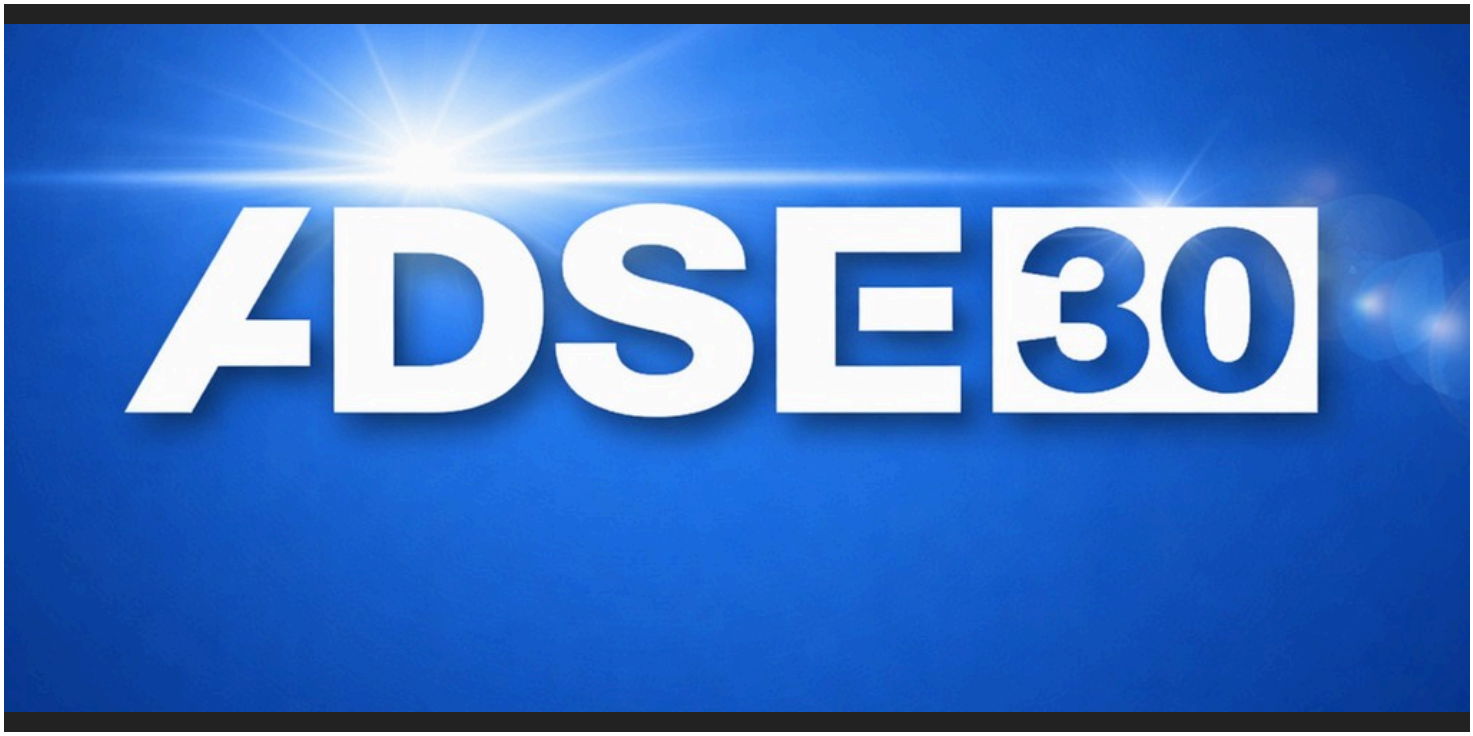

Welcome to the ADSE Airworthiness Newsletter of June 2026.

Oh wow... “Air France and Airbus found guilty of corporate manslaughter over 2009 plane crash”. That headline certainly is bound to get attention. Surprisingly, it barely did and that surprised me.

After initially being acquitted in 2023, the Cour d’appel de Paris has now concluded that both Airbus and Air France bear criminal responsibility for the AF447 accident (source). The court found that the crew reacted incorrectly to conflicting airspeed indications but also concluded that organisational and design-related factors played a meaningful role in the chain of events (source).

- For Airbus, the following subjects have been addressed:
  - The choice of display for information provided to the crew by the aircraft's onboard monitoring system;
  - The failure to include in its manuals the recovery procedure in the event of an aircraft stall;
  - The underestimation of the severity of the failures of the airspeed sensors equipped on the aircraft (‘Major’);
  - A lack of information provided to airlines and crews regarding the phenomenon of airspeed sensor icing.
- For AirFrance, the following subjects have been addressed:
  - The lack of pilot training and the inadequacy of existing training programs to enable the crew to respond to the situation encountered on flight AF 447;
  - The insufficient consideration of feedback from crews who faced incidents related to airspeed sensor icing in 2008 and 2009, and the lack of information provided to crews.

What makes this verdict interesting is not the fine itself (€225,000 for each company, the maximum allowed under French law), but the willingness to look beyond the sharp end. For years, many discussions around AF447 eventually arrived at the same conclusion: pilot error. Personally, I have always found that to be one of the least useful root causes in aviation safety. Pilots operate at the

sharp end of a much larger system. When we stop our analysis at the cockpit door, we risk missing the organisational decisions, design assumptions, training philosophies and risk assessments that shaped the environment in which those pilots were operating.

The appeals court appears to have taken a similar view. Rather than focusing exclusively on the actions of the flight crew, it concluded that failures within both the airline and the manufacturer contributed sufficiently to warrant criminal liability.

Airbus is appealing at the Court of Cassation. Whether Airbus succeeds in this appeal remains to be seen. But regardless of the final legal outcome, this case reinforces an important safety lesson: accidents are rarely the result of a single mistake. More often, they are the consequence of a system that failed to recognise and address vulnerabilities ***before*** they reach the cockpit. In many ways, this verdict reflects what safety professionals have been saying for decades: **people inherit the conditions of the system in which they operate**.

As always: Improve, absorb, stay cool, drink sufficient water and stay airworthy!

Eelco Bakker

ADSE Airworthiness Newsletter

News on EASA Level

- EASA published a new "Terms of Reference" (ToR) to kickstart a new rulemaking programme. This ToR aims to introduce the same improvement for new aircraft regarding "*the effectiveness of flight crew alerting systems (FCAS) in supporting the flight crew with the* ***identification, prioritisation and management of alerts*****" (25.1322) for existing aircraft**. This will lead to an update for Part-26 and CS-26. It has not been decided which existing aircraft will need to comply to this requirement for new aircraft.
- EASA released their latest PROPOSED issue of its **Concept Paper on Artificial Intelligence** for comment. This issue broadens the framework of technical guidance, including reinforcement learning and symbolic AI. It also explores Level 3 AI applications, corresponding to 'advanced automation': Novel types of operations in which the human end user may be either remotely present, or not present during the operation. Feedback can be provided no later than August 12, 2026
- EASA is consulting the industry on an update of their view of "***the integrity of nickel powder metallurgy rotating critical parts for gas turbines***" (ref: CM-PIFS-013). The revision is a reflection of failures and experience related to reactive inclusion, which affect chemical/morphological nature of base material. The other update is on emphasizing the importance of having a Manufacturing Plan. Closing date of consultation: 26/06/2026.
- EASA is consulting the industry on their view of "***Cold Dwell Fatigue*** *in Titanium Rotor Critical Parts*" (ref: CM-PROP-003). Research and operational experience show that CDF is a complex and highly variable failure mechanism that can initiate subsurface cracks at relatively low

stresses, often associated with microstructural features such as Micro Textured Regions (MTRs) and microporosity, and can lead to accelerated crack growth and catastrophic failure. Closing date of consultation: 10/07/2026

- EASA published an Equivalent Safety Finding, open for comments on **a particular firewall of an OEM not being fireproof** (CS25.1191(b): 15 minutes) but having compensating factors. Deadline for comments: July 10th 2026. My take on this ESF: Apart for not considering latent failures, a definition of potential ignition sources and no definition of "direct vicinity", the ESF does not state if the non-complying firewall does at least require to comply to a minimum fire endurance capability. In my eyes, a very meager ESF.
- EASA published an update to their Easy Access Rules for European Technical Standard Orders (**ETSO**).
- EASA released their **Annual Activity Report 2025**.
- EASA launched a new **Certification Platform** that replaces the existing SEPIAC. SEPIAC will be closed for external access on 14 July 2026. This new tool will mainly manage Initial Airworthiness types of applications.
- EASA launched a new **Organisation Approvals Tool** (OA Tool) for MOA and MTOA to "*make the oversight process clearer, more efficient, and easier to manage for organisations operating under EASA approval.*" This concerns in my view only the foreign MOA and MTOA as the EU approvals are handled on a national level.

alt_text

News from the FAA

- The FAA published a revision to their order about **Certificate Management of Production Approval Holders** (ref: ORDER 8120.23B). This update includes, amongst other subjects:
  - Introduction of the fourth pillar of the risk assessment: the process for determining risk within a facility and preparing the facility plan.
  - Integration of Safety Management System (SMS) compliance audits and their applicability to oversight of a PAH with a required or voluntary SMS (VSMS) into the order.
  - Emphasizing the selection of subtier suppliers and refines the selection of facilities for audits.
  - Establishing supplier risk indicators for suppliers and subtier suppliers as higher, moderate, or lower risk to factor into the facility selection process.
  - Defining first article inspections (FAI) and emphasizes FAI under two product audit criteria (Inspection and Documentation) during the performance of a product audit.
- The FAA published a new Advisory Circular (ref AC 120-84) regarding "**Aging Aircraft Inspections and Records Reviews**". This AC provides guidance pertaining to aging aircraft inspections and records reviews accomplished to satisfy the requirements of the FAA Aging Aircraft Safety Final Rule.
- The FAA published a new information Notice (ref N8900.777) regarding "Certification and Oversight of **Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Advanced Air Mobility Aircraft**".
- The FAA and the EASA have signed a pledge to reinforce the importance of their partnership, by stating that **they need to work together more**.

EASA
European Aviation Safety Agency

Upcoming EASA events

- 2026 Jul 07-08 On-site event: EASA-EUROCONTROL Workshop — **Satellite Navigation Under Threat**: From Safety Risk to Coordinated Responses (Brussels)
- 2026 Sep 09-10 Hybrid event: EASA **Artificial Intelligence** Days 2026
- 2026 Sep 22-23 On-site event: European Technical Standard Order (**ETSO**) Workshop 2026 (Köln)
- 2026 Sep 29-30 On-site event: General Aviation **Structures** Workshop (Köln)
- 2026 Sep 29-30 On-site event: ICAO/EASA Third Global RSOO / RAIO Forum for **Aviation Safety** (Georgetown, Guyana)
- 2026 Oct 07-08 Hybrid event: **Part-IS** Workshop 2026
- 2026 Oct 20-21 On-site event: EASA **Helicopters Flight Test** Workshop (Köln)
- 2026 Oct 27-28 Hybrid event: **Innovative Air Mobility** Implementation Forum
- 2026 Nov 18-19 On-site event: EASA Annual **Safety Conference 2026**
- 2026 Nov 30-Dec 3 On-site event: EASA Rotorcraft Symposium and European Rotors (Lyon)

News on BREXIT

- The Brexit is proving highly problematic for the UK at the moment, due to a **lack of mutual recognition agreements** in key areas such as certification of parts and repairs, and licensing of technicians and pilots. This is resulting is a farcical situation where identical parts – produced by the same company in the same factory – cannot be used interchangeably between UK- and EU-registered aircraft due to paperwork issues. Also, lack of mutual recognition for Part 66 aircraft maintenance engineers means EU-licensed engineers cannot work on a UK-registered aircraft, or vice-versa. A group of trade associations have written to the government, warning that without urgent action their members' "ability to remain internationally competitive" will be harmed. [Thanks Jan for the tip!]

Other NEWS

- The CAA-NL has published the 2026 edition of "**Staat van de Luchtvaart**". In this edition, one of the subjects is about unmanned aviation and their implementation in the Aviation System. Another subject is about how the National Authority should work together with the municipality on e.g. solar panels in the vicinity of airports on which I reported a while ago in this newsletter.
- The CAA-UK is identifying the proposed regulatory changes needed to accommodate the **safe use of new types of VTOL aircraft** in the UK. With a new consultation, they are now specifically covering Complex Motor-Powered Aircraft (CMPA), continuing airworthiness, pilot licensing and flight operations regulations. Deadline for comments: 31 JUL 2026.
- The CAA-UK published an updated CAP 1530 providing guidance for UK Part-145 organisations and licensed aircraft engineers on **on-the-job training for the first type rating in a Part-66 licence** category or subcategory. It explains OJT requirements, task selection, supervision, assessment and approval expectations to support compliant delivery and endorsement applications.

- The CAA-UK published the new version of CAP-632 “**Operation of 'Permit-to-Fly' ex-military aircraft on the UK register**”.

Stay updated! Subscribe or unsubscribe to the ADSE Airworthiness Newsletter below.

Subscribe **Unsubscribe**

ADSE
Planeetbaan 4
2132 HZ HOOFDDORP

"In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice"