



Summary Report

A summary investigation, in accordance with Article 45 of the Ordinance on the Safety Investigation of Transport Incidents from 17th December 2014 (OSITI), as of 1st February 2015 (SR 742.161) was carried out with regards to the serious incident. This report was prepared to ensure that lessons can be learned from the incident in question.

Aircraft	A319-111	G-EZIT		
Operator	easyJet Airline Company Ltd, Hangar 89, London Luton Airport			
Owner	easyJet Airline Company Ltd, Hangar 89, London Luton Airport			
Pilot in command	French citizen, born 1971			
Licence	ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) airline transport pilot licence aeroplane (ATPL(A)), issued by the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority			
Flying hours	Total	14 000 h	During the last 90 days	105 h
	On the incident type	7 000 h	During the last 90 days	105 h
Copilot	British citizen, born 1984			
Licence	ICAO ATPL(A), issued by the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority			
Flying hours	Total	- h	During the last 90 days	101 h
	On the incident type	4 000 h	During the last 90 days	101 h
Location	In cruise flight, flight level 380, air traffic control unit: Rhine radar			
Date and time	22 nd January 2016, from 13:35 UTC ¹			
Type of operation	Commercial			
Flight rules	Instrument flight rules (IFR)			
Flight phase	Cruise flight, descent and landing			
Incident type	Incapacitation			
Point of departure	Berlin-Schönefeld (EDDB)			
Landing location	Zurich (LSZH)			
Destination	Lyon Saint-Exupéry (LFLL)			
Injuries to persons	Crew	Passengers	Third parties	
Minor	0	0	0	
None	4	125	n/a	
Damage to aircraft	Not damaged			
Third-party damage	None			

¹ UTC: Universal Time Coordinated

Factual information

Course of events

The Airbus A319-111 aircraft, registered as G-EZIT, took off from Berlin-Schönefeld Airport (EDDB) under the ICAO flight number EZY 4374 and the radio call sign EZY 47HB for the scheduled commercial flight to Lyon Saint-Exupéry (LFLL) at 13:14 UTC. Four crew members and 125 passengers were on board.

At 13:35:11 UTC during cruise at flight level (FL) 380, the copilot informed the commander that he did not feel well and needed to go to the toilet. Following this, the copilot remarked that he might have eaten something bad. Shortly beforehand, he had consumed a sandwich that he had brought from home. The commander subsequently commented that they could consider a diversion landing. However, the conversation indicated that there was still a positive mood amongst the flight crew, which meant that a diversion landing did not yet seem appropriate.

After a frequency change, the conversation returned to the copilot's well-being and, at 13:40:04 UTC, the commander explicitly asked the copilot how he felt. After a further frequency change, the commander also informed the cabin crew that the copilot was unwell.

At 13:48:50 UTC, the commander informed the copilot that they could land anywhere. Shortly afterwards, the copilot responded by saying that he did not feel at all well. After changing frequency again, the commander broached the subject of a diversion landing once more and, after initially rejecting the idea, the copilot agreed to it when, at 13:54:05 UTC, the commander explained that they could not know how the situation would develop.

The commander proposed Zurich (LSZH) as the diversion landing location. The copilot was in agreement with this and was of the opinion that he would still be able to assist. They discussed how to proceed.

At 13:55:16 UTC, the commander informed air traffic control regarding the copilot's incapacity and the consequent planned diversion landing in Zurich. He requested the relevant weather information.

At 13:56:02 UTC, the commander received clearance to descend to FL 250. Moments later, the commander requested that a member of the cabin crew should remain in the cockpit to monitor the copilot, who still felt able to act as the pilot monitoring (PM) at that time.

At 13:58:28 UTC, air traffic control informed the commander that everything was organised and that he should now call Swiss radar on the frequency 136.150 MHz. Following the corresponding call, the air traffic control officer (ATCO) advised the commander that he could expect an ILS² approach to runway 14 in Zurich using radar vectoring.

When the ATCO enquired as to what exactly was wrong with the copilot, the commander responded by saying, among other things, „[...] So he's just monitoring me but you could consider it 'incapacity' in the flight deck, with a single pilot on board." At this time, the aircraft was descending at FL 280.

At 14:00:55 UTC, the ATCO notified the commander that he had another 45 track miles available for a direct approach and asked whether this would be enough for him. The aircraft was descending at FL 245 when the commander answered in the negative with the remark, „We require more, Easy Four Seven Hotel Bravo." The ATCO responded to this by saying, „Not a problem, Four Seven Hotel Bravo, continue descent to flight level one three zero."

At 14:01:15 UTC, the commander informed the passengers of the landing in Zurich to take place in approximately 20 minutes.

² ILS: instrument landing system

According to the commander's statement, the copilot was no longer able to perform his monitoring function from around FL 200.

After switching frequency to the Zurich arrival frequency of 135.225 MHz, the commander responded to a heading instruction from the ATC at 14:02:01 UTC: „*Left heading one seven zero for ILS one four, Easy Four Seven Hotel Bravo. The first officer is quite sick so I declare a PAN PAN.*” The ATCO acknowledged the PAN PAN urgency message immediately. At that time, the aircraft was descending at FL 210.

As the condition of the copilot deteriorated, the pilot issued a MAYDAY distress message at 14:05:48 UTC, which the ATCO acknowledged immediately.

In response to the question of whether they would need assistance after landing, which the ATCO asked at 14:09:10 UTC, the commander said that he was planning to taxi to the parking position, keep the passengers on board and allow the medical personnel on board, as the copilot was conscious but very ill. The ATCO confirmed this course of action.

At 14:11 UTC, the commander performed the final check and concluded this by calling out „*landing check is completed*”. After having been informed about the allocated parking position by the ATCO, the commander asked for a follow-me car after landing. The ATCO answered that he would ensure one was provided.

The automatically generated call-outs of the radio altitude (RA) during landing, „*fifty – forty – thirty – twenty – retard – retard*” began at 14:14:58 UTC. The landing was uneventful.

At 14:16:19 UTC, the ATCO advised the commander as follows: „*Easy Four Seven Hotel Bravo now follow the follow-me car and contact apron, one two decimal eight five zero.*” The commander thanked him and carried out the frequency change.

Subsequently, the commander taxied the aircraft to the allocated parking position, where the copilot was immediately met and looked after by personnel from the medical centre at Zurich Airport.

After this, the passengers were able to leave the aircraft in the normal way. They were flown to their original destination by a replacement aircraft from the aviation company.

Medical findings

According to the copilot, medical investigations at Zurich Airport's medical centre revealed an allergy-like reaction or intolerance to ingested food, which led to momentary incapacity. Just one hour after landing, the copilot was given medical permission to make the journey home as a passenger.

No consequences arose as a result and the copilot was able to resume his work as early as the day after the incident. It was not easily possible to assess the actual severity of the acute illness during the flight.

Conclusions

The diversion landing came about because the commander wanted to obtain medical assistance for the copilot, who had become incapacitated, as quickly as possible. The recordings from the cockpit voice recorder (CVR), the flight data recorder (FDR) and air traffic control do not reveal any difficulties or anomalies at any stage during the flight.

The commander acted according to the situation, safety-conscious and targeted.

The experience shows that with the notification of an incapacitation, issuing a distress call (MAYDAY) can create additional benefit in terms of the attention paid and priority handling by air traffic control.

The definitive version of this report is the original report in German.

Bern, 21 February 2019

Swiss Transportation Safety Investigation Board