

On *Probable* Causes of the Martinair crash in Faro, 1992

The official (= Portuguese) commission of inquiry identifies two *probable* causes for the accident. The lack of firmness by using *probable*, raises questions as 'was the investigation sufficient thorough and comprehensive?' and 'are proper lessons learned?'. It also leaves passengers and relatives with unanswered and often even growing questions.

On *probable*

'Probable' leaves room for speculation and alternative truths, such as the prominent Dutch claim of the 'unexpected gust of wind' as cause of the crash.

A The Hague court refuted this claim in 2020 (almost 30 years after the crash).

'Probable' almost urgently invites additional investigations. Such as the 2011 Hurlings/AvioConsult investigation.

On landing gear (one of the two identified probable causes of the crash)

The question on thoroughness of the investigation became even more obvious as one of the two identified causes of the crash was 'the landing made on the right landing gear, which exceeded the structural limitations of the aircraft.'

In 2016, Dutch TV news channel EenVandaag reported that a technician claims he was "pressured" into signing a form that postponed the replacement of important landing gear for the third time when it should have been delayed no more than twice.

In 2020 the *Dutch Safety Board* (DSB) was asked by the *Dutch Minister of Infrastructure* to investigate this claim. DSB expects to finalise and report on this investigation early 2021.

Remarkable that the Portuguese investigators seem not to have looked into maintenance details.

On possible (political) interference:

From *BBC News* 'How air crash investigations may be thrown off course' (5 April 2011)

David Gleave, an independent British investigator, fears politics often get in the way of air accident investigations.

"I would say most investigators are very interested in what the truth is, but then the politics comes into it," he said. "It's not unknown to have the lead investigator replaced if the answer is not going in the correct direction that the minister may wish the investigation to go in. ..."

Dutch Newspaper *Limburgs Dagblad* reports (6 November 1993) that the investigation is delayed because one of the Portuguese investigators resigned from the investigation committee.

Summarizing

The use of 'probable' into determining causes of the crash, the questions on the investigation on for instance the landing gear and the resignation of one of the Portuguese investigators during the investigation all lead to the basic question:

Was the investigation into the Martinair crash in Faro sufficiently independent, thorough and comprehensive?