

Crash of a plane of the Polish government¹

A Polish aeroplane flying to a ceremony commemorating the massacre in Katyn crashed in Smolensk in 2010 with a number of high-ranking military and political leaders of the country on board. One of the victims was Lech Kaczynski, former President of the Republic of Poland.



A report spanning 328 pages was drawn up to describe the details of the crash. The most astonishing question asked in the report was how a system could reach a point where pilots were completely incapable of flying a plane.

The pilots were notified that visibility at the destination airport was 400 meters. While they were descending, they were warned that their direction was incorrect, and they might hit topographical features. They disregarded the warning.

Due to lack of proper training, no one in the crew had the skills to fly the plane. As they were military pilots, they had never before practiced emergency situations with such a plane. The captain did not even have a single test flight in this type of plane during the preceding year. The military did not have a proper Manual of Fundamental Procedures; the crew used an outdated manual from 1994. All their licences were issued unlawfully.

¹ This work is protected by copyright. Created within the framework of priority project No. SROP-1.1.21-2012-2012-0001, entitled "Prevention of corruption and the revision of public administration development". Further documents related to the training are available on the website www.korrupciomegelozes.kormany.hu. Source: http://fekszarny.blog.hu/2011/07/30/ezert_zuhant_le_a_lengyel_kormanygep_botranynos_hianyossagok

The crew was not prepared for the specific flight as a group. They were late to the airport. They were not properly informed about weather conditions. The place for emergency landing specified for them was closed on the day of the flight. The navigator did not speak Russian, and was therefore incapable of performing radio duties. (The captain provided assistance to him.)

They inadvertently deviated from the designated route once during the flight. The wing flap was adjusted to 36 degrees instead of the required 45 degrees. The inappropriately calibrated altitude meter indicated an altitude of 136 meters above actual height. When the plane crashed, the majority of the passengers did not even have their seat belts fastened.

The report mentions that the crew failed to question any of the commands of the captain, although several of those were incorrect (degree of descent, required speed, etc.).

Under the given weather conditions, the Russian destination airport should also have been closed due to insufficient lighting. The trees in front of the landing path were too high.

The report lists 163 factors as the causes of the accident. The most important lesson for us is that the list contains several reasons related to human error, negligence and non-compliance, which could have been easily avoided.