

Airbus 320 Germanwings Crash: German Regulator ‘unaware’ of Andreas Lubitz’s Severe Depression

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Lufthansa’s medical staff failed to inform German aviation authorities the co-pilot of the crashed Germanwings plane, Andreas Lubitz, had severe depression, Welt am Sonntag reports.

The probe has shown that Lubitz regularly visited psychiatrists, and took antidepressants and tranquilizers to treat his depression. In such cases, Lufthansa medics are required to notify the German Federal Aviation Office (Luftfahrtbundesamt, LBA), but they neglected to do so, the governmental body said.

“Luftfahrtbundesamt had not been informed that L. [Lubitz] was undergoing treatment,” the LBA said in a statement, as cited by Welt am Sonntag. A note was discovered in Lubitz’s records ordering the LBA to be informed of the co-pilot’s health issues.

Lufthansa refused to comment on the latest findings.

The Germanwings Airbus 320 passenger plane crashed on March 24 in the French Alps, killing 150 people on board. Data from the black boxes show Lubitz locked the pilot out of the cabin before the crash and accelerated descent, which culminated in the catastrophic crash into the mountain.

Prosecutors are currently looking into whether homicide can be proved, according to the French daily Provence. While evidence of Lubitz wanting to destroy the plane mounts, deliberate targeting of the passengers has not so far been shown.

The Wall Street Journal has revealed that in November EU officials told Berlin of long-standing issues pertaining to airlines’ oversight.

Germany was blacklisted for aviation security violations, with EU observers frequently stressing there was a lack of qualified medical staff overseeing the physical and psychological wellbeing of pilots, the WSJ said, citing its own sources.

At the time, representatives of German air carriers assured the EU they would beef up personnel and correct flaws in the system.

On Thursday, German Transport Minister Alexander Dobrindt also said a task force to examine similar issues raised by the Germanwings crash would be established, though this appears to have no direct links with the EU’s findings.

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