



EU supports the take-off of Helicopter Emergency Medical Services in Thailand

Bangkok, Thailand, 11 May 2018 – On 11th May, a roadmap to enhance Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) in Thailand has been agreed between the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) and the National Institute for Emergency Medicine (NIEM) with the support of the European Union (EU).

Critical health care for heart-attack, stroke and accident victims revolves around providing proper health care during the first hour, as this has been proven to significantly increase the survival rate. Helicopters can play an important role in ensuring rapid transport of medical teams to the site, or evacuation of patients to suitable hospitals within that time, typically referred to as the 'golden hour'.

Currently healthcare operations in Thailand are predominantly pre, post and inter-hospital transport operations; apart from the Thai Sky Doctors initiative, helicopters are infrequently used to land as close as possible to the health care incident or accident location to drop off highly qualified medical teams or to evacuate patients to a hospital.

Dr Chula Sukmanop, Director General of CAAT, said: "We envisage a two-step approach. The first is to be able to rescue patients with helicopters from multiple pre-approved sites in strategic locations under the current regulatory framework. The second is to be able to rescue patients from any place in Thailand in line with the European system."

Flt. Lt. Dr Atchariya Pangma, MD, Secretary General of NIEM, said: "HEMS can help reduce the number of fatalities as a result of health incidents and road accidents, particularly in difficult-to-reach or congested locations, which are prevalent in Thailand. This brings us closer to our vision of a standardised emergency medical system providing universal access to everyone and with the cooperation of all sectors."

Director General Henrik Hololei, the top official for Mobility and Transport of the European Union, said: "Europe is committed to its partnership with Thailand, and through the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), we are proud to support CAAT's ongoing regulatory work. Safe HEMS operations will support tourism, accelerate the development of aviation business and entail the education of highly skilled aero-medical personnel in the country."

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About the European Union

The European Union as a global actor works to improve the lives of people in Europe and worldwide. The EU and Thailand have a long-standing partnership. Through the exchanges of best practises and know-how, the EU is committed to support Thailand's rapid growth and development. The collaboration between Thailand and the EU with the support of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) will ensure that the highest common standards of safety and environmental protection in civil aviation are achieved.