



GEDIMINAS ZIEMELIS: DESPITE PAYING \$164 M, BOMBARDIER CONTINUES TO RISK HUMAN LIVES

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On 10 of January Polish national carrier LOT flight LO 3924 crash-landed at Warsaw's Chopin airport when Bombardier Dash 8 Q400 nose gear did not lock. It was the ninth similar happening with the same type of aircraft. In 2008, Canadian aircraft manufacturer managed to quench similar scandal by agreeing to pay out \$164 million settlement with SAS Airlines. Maybe this is the reason why over 1000 planes, flying all around the world, were not scrapped. According to aviation experts, the malfunction of Dash Q series aircraft might be a design flaw and it cannot be fixed.

The incident at Warsaw on January 10 is far from uncommon. Less than a month ago, in December 2017, another LOT flight LO3844 had a close call in a [very similar situation](#): pilots of Q400 reported problems releasing landing gear, but managed to solve the issue at the last moment and eventually landed safely at Warsaw.

The culmination point in the infamous Q-series chassis story was reached in the year 2007. That year, a Q400 operated by All Nippon Airways nose-landed safely at K?chi Ry?ma Airport on March 13, 2007. Since some media reports accounted over 70 separated incidents with the model (from

faulty lighting to landing gear) in Japan, Bombardier acknowledged the [Q400 had some "teething problems"](#).

But the real problems struck Bombardier a few months later, when Q400 chassis issues enraged even Q400 launch customer the Scandinavian Airlines (SAS). Two separate incidents, both involving landing gear failures on Q400 turboprops, occurred in September 2017. A month later – it happened again, prompting the airline to ground its whole Qs fleet and begin legal battles against Bombardier.

After a year of legal battles, Bombardier managed to reach a pricy settlement with SAS and silence the Q scandal. The Canadian plane maker [paid the airline \\$164 million in settlement](#), but the real value of the deal might be much bigger (guessed at \$1.75 billion), as SAS took a chance to renew its fleet as part of the deal.

SAS exchanged the settlement money into renewed fleet – they added 13 CRJ900 jets and 14 new Q400s. However, the Q400s did not go to the Scandinavian airline itself, but were passed on to affiliate airlines Wideroe and airBaltic. Interestingly, SAS sold their shares in these carriers in an upcoming couple of years. And big surprise here – in 2016 one of airBaltic's Q400 landed at Riga without its nose landing gear deployed. Which poses a serious, although rhetorical, question - is the happening from last week at Warsaw airport going to be the last one in Bombardier Q series history?

Facts about Dash Q series:

Manufacturer: [de Havilland Canada Bombardier Aerospace](#);

First flight: June 20, 1983;

First company to order the aircraft: NorOntair;

Aircraft being made until now;

Aircraft manufactured since 1983: 1,232 until September 30, 2017;

List price: Q400 32.2 million USD.



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