

German crew stage demo on second day of Lufthansa strike

November 8 2019



It got noisy during the strike

Hundreds of Lufthansa flights were cancelled Friday as a strike by German cabin crew stretched into a second day, with workers staging a noisy rally to push their demands for better pay and conditions.

The 48-hour walkout that started on Thursday was to last until 2300 GMT on Friday, as Germany's UFO [union](#) pressed on with the stoppage even after agreeing to Lufthansa's surprise offer for weekend talks.

Germany's largest carrier initially said the stoppage would force it to scrap 1,300 flights over the two days.

But on Friday afternoon it said the number of cancellations had climbed to 1,500—affecting 200,000 passengers.

The company has offered travellers the chance to rebook for free or swap their domestic flights for train tickets, but the knock-on effects of delays and disruptions are expected to drag on.

"We need to see concrete progress" at this weekend's meeting, UFO spokesman Nicoley Baublies told AFP at Frankfurt airport, where some 500 [union members](#) held a demo.

Clad in yellow safety vests and blowing whistles, the employees gathered outside Lufthansa's offices.

One demonstrator held up a sign that read "Non stop you. What about the crew?"

The union said the strike was necessary because Lufthansa had refused to discuss its demands for better benefits, higher pay especially for entry-level positions, and easier routes into fixed contracts.

A key obstacle in the long-running row has been Lufthansa's insistence that UFO leaders no longer had the right to represent staff after an internal leadership tussle.

Lufthansa has even challenged the union's [legal status](#) in court.

But Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr unexpectedly signalled a shift in position on Thursday, when he invited UFO leaders to hold preliminary talks on Saturday with the hopes of agreeing to formal arbitration.

Spohr said he was "confident" the legal questions could be resolved.

The union accepted the offer but warned that further walkouts could follow if the talks failed to lead to a breakthrough.

"Then the battle will continue," Baublies said.

The two-day strike marked a chance for the union to flex its muscles after being weakened by months of infighting.

The internal disputes have cost it support among Lufthansa's 21,000 [flight](#) attendants, with some members switching to rival unions.

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Citation: German crew stage demo on second day of Lufthansa strike (2019, November 8)
retrieved 20 April 2024 from
<https://techxplore.com/news/2019-11-german-crew-stage-demo-day.html>

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