

German union vow new Lufthansa strike 'in coming days'

December 26 2019



A demonstrator holds a poster reading, "Non Stop You - What about the crew?" during a protest of Germany's UFO flight attendants' union at the airport in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, in November 2019

A German cabin crew union said on Thursday it would call a fresh strike at Lufthansa "in the coming days", raising the spectre of travel chaos

during the busy end-of-year holiday season.

The UFO union said it would announce details of the planned strike at 1600 GMT on Friday, in the latest escalation of a long-running battle for better pay and conditions at Germany's flagship airline.

The strike call had been expected after the union said on Sunday that arbitration talks with Lufthansa "had failed".

Although the union vowed to spare passengers the upheaval of walkouts at Christmas, it had warned new stoppages could come any time after Thursday.

Lufthansa condemned the latest threat of industrial action.

"We don't see strikes as a solution," a spokesman told DPA news agency.

He said the carrier "continued to be believe" in the arbitration process, and was willing to take part in fresh talk proposed by two independent mediators for early January.

Lufthansa flight attendants already staged a massive 48-hour strike last month that led to 1,500 cancellations at German airports, affecting about 200,000 passengers.

As well as demanding higher wages, especially for entry-level jobs, the UFO union is seeking better benefits and easier routes into long-term contracts.

Lufthansa for a long time refused to discuss the demands, claiming the [union](#) no longer had the right to represent its 22,000 cabin crew employees after an internal leadership struggle. The company even challenged UFO's [legal status](#) in court.

But Germany's flagship carrier unexpectedly changed its stance during November's stoppage, agreeing to arbitration with UFO leaders and two mediators.

Neither UFO nor Lufthansa have given details about the arbitration talks, but German media have reported they couldn't even agree on which topics should be covered.

According to German media, aside from pushing its labour demands, UFO is also seeking assurances that [flight attendants](#) won't face disciplinary action over the strikes.

Four of the Lufthansa group's smaller subsidiary airlines have also taken part in walkouts as part of the months-long row.

A one-day warning [strike](#) in October led to several dozen flight cancellations at Eurowings, Germanwings, SunExpress and Lufthansa CityLine.

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