

Hundreds of Flights Cancelled in Germany Over Cabin Crew Strike



Berlin, October 27 (RHC)-- A walkout by the cabin crew of two low-cost airlines in Germany has grounded at least 400 flights and stranded some 40,000 passengers.

The 24-hour strike began early Thursday as the staff of Eurowings and Germanwings stayed away in Berlin, Duesseldorf, Hamburg, Cologne, Dortmund, Hanover and Stuttgart.

Two main airports in Frankfurt and Munich were not hit by the move, allowing Eurowings, the one mainly affected by the current strike, to save its long-haul flights. Long queues were formed at Duesseldorf airport as seemingly irritated passengers sought to rebook tickets.

The staff of the two airlines, represented by UFO flight attendants union, is locked in various disputes with their employers. The crew of Eurowings demand salary increases and improved working conditions while the personnel of Germanwings have urged better terms for part-time employees.

Eurowings and Germanwings are both owned by Lufthansa, Germany's flagship carrier which has seen several walkouts by crew and pilots over the past years. The industrial action has come as the airline struggles to reduce costs amid rising rivalry between German carriers to offer passengers more affordable flights.

UFO decided to increase pressure on Lufthansa when negotiations failed earlier this week and called a strike for staff at Germanwings, which is being merged with Eurowings.

Officials in the union said the staff were quite right to stay away from the flights, adding that more work stoppages could come if negotiations fail to make headway.

“If the employer's behavior doesn't change, we will strike on two days next week,” UFO representative Daniel Flohr said, without elaborating on the dates and carriers that could be affected by the next walkouts.

Eurowings has offered an average pay increase of around seven percent, saying it is ready to more negotiations with UFO.

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