

Ryanair cabin crews strike in Belgium, dozens of flights grounded

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Photo> A Ryan air Boeing 737-800 airplane takes off from the airport in Palma de Mallorca
REUTERS/Paul Hanna/File Photo

Brussels, December 30 (RHC)-- Belgium-based Ryanair cabin crews have started a three-day strike, resulting in dozens of the low-cost Irish carrier's flights being grounded and affecting thousands of passengers. The strike came on Friday as the cost of living crisis continued, increasing labour strife across Europe that has disrupted the festive period.

Ryanair employees in Belgium have already gone on strike several times this year to demand that the country's labour laws be fully applied, grounding aircraft. The labour unions have notably accused Ryanair of illegally pressuring staff in Belgium to work from time to time in other sites across Europe, particularly in its home base Dublin, where the airline suffers employee shortages.

They also allege Ryanair, Europe's biggest airline in terms of passengers transported, is not properly declaring salaries to Belgian social security authorities and is sometimes paying wages under the national legal minimum.

Charleroi airport CEO Philippe Verdonck said 48 outgoing and incoming Ryanair flights had been cancelled on Friday, expecting the strike to halt 30 percent of the airlines' flights through its Belgium hub. Overall, about 22,000 passengers were expected to be affected over the three days, he added.

Ryanair has 15 planes in Belgium and the strike was not due to affect its aircraft based in other countries.

The unions are also planning to strike over the weekend of January 7 and 8 at the end of Belgium's traditional winter break.

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