

Lufthansa Pilots Promise No Strikes During Negotiations



Berlin, November 3 (RHC)-- The union representing pilots with Germany's main airline, Lufthansa, says they will not stage a strike against early retirement plans during ongoing negotiations with airline officials.

On Sunday, the president of union, Vereinigung Cockpit (VC), Ilja Schulz, said the pilots have declared a temporary truce with Lufthansa. He told reporters: "We are currently in talks again," adding that the aim is to sign a wage agreement. Vereinigung Cockpit represents some 9,300 pilots.

The pilots have been striking against plans by the managements to raise the age at which they are able to receive early retirement. Pilots are currently allowed to retire at the age of 55 and receive up to 60 percent of their pay until they reach 65.

The airline, however, has so far refused to roll back its plans for the retirement age, saying the current retirement scheme is no longer needed given an increase in life expectancy and a recent court ruling that allows pilots to work until the age of 65.

The pilots have already staged nine walkouts in the past few months, affecting thousands of passengers and causing financial loss for the airline as well. The series of walkouts have so far cost Lufthansa about USD 90 million dollars.

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