AIRLINE STRIKES: HOW MUCH LONGER SHOULD PASSENGERS SUFFER?

News / Airlines

While European air passenger law protects passengers against most flight disturbances, at least 400 thousand air travellers were left helpless and grounded due to airline staff strikes last year alone. With European airlines facing financial instability and specialist shortages, experts predict cabin crew and pilot strikes to become an increasing problem, despite still treated as "extraordinary" and uncompensated disruptance. However, that might not be the case for long, as one flight compensation company is dedicated to put a stop to it, one signature at a time.

In 2016, pilots on strike made major EU airline Lufthansa cancel around 4500 flights affecting a whopping 350 thousand passengers. The next year, British Airlines's cabin crew walk out and halted ten thousands of flights during the busiest season for two months. At least 1400 BA workers were on strike against pay gaps, yet BA kept adding fuel to the fire by calling strike action "completely unnecessary". And as far as instability in airline industry comes, this was just the beginning.

After Airberlin, Alitalia and Monarch Airlines halted operations last year it was clear that Europe's carriers are in crisis. As if that wouldn't be enough, global pilots shortfall has already hit the carriers hard with Ryanair being the first serious victim last year. Growing

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concerns are raising the red flags to the aviation employees which are quick to turn to unions.

“To hold a strike, unions must give an early warning to the carriers. Having time to negotiate the situation with their staff, airlines should be able to put plans in place to prevent any harm to their customers. EU 261/2004 explains extraordinary circumstances as flight disruptions that were unavoidable, even if all financial and operational measures would have been taken, but strikes don’t seem to fit in this category, because if airlines went the extra mile, it would not be happening,” explains Marius Stonkus, the CEO of SKYCOP.

Flight compensation company believes that current exemption of strikes must be reconsidered. Willing to make flights safer for a number of travellers, SKYCOP is summoning the comments from devastaded passengers and having talks with unions to fully grasp the scale of the situation. One of the ways to protect European travellers against raising instability is an appeal to Europen Commission. If SKYCOP manages to get enough support from the flyers, the flawed air passenger law might soon go over drastic changes.

“It’s every manager’s responsibility to coordinate their staff so that best possible results would be accomplished. Yet we see that air passenger law has made an exception for aviation executives. While employees are protesting and causing havoc for thousands of passengers, the management is excempt from paying out up to €600 compensations for their inadequate decisions, ” says Marius Stonkus, the CEO of global flight compensation company SKYCOP. “For now, we are gathering the facts, but after that – a petition is definitely on the table and if necessary, our team is ready to go all the way into talks with the European Commission over the ways the law will better suit current aviation market and its tendencies.”

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