LUFTHANSA REVISES DECISION: WILL NOW ACCEPT MORE AIRBUS A320 NEO DELIVERIES

News / Airlines

Lufthansa Airlines has announced that it will be accepting deliveries of more AIRBUS GROUP A320neo aircraft, with certain conditions. The statement comes days after the carrier had declared that it would not take deliveries of more planes until engine issues were fixed. The conditions that changed the company's mind were not disclosed.

According to Lufthansa's spokeswoman, Anja Lindenstein, the German carrier will be taking further orders of the A320neo planes in the next few days—roughly six weeks after it stepped up to take the delivery of the first A320neo when Qatar Airways backed out due to ongoing engine issues. The new planes will also be subjected to restrictions by the carrier and will only fly domestic German routes where it has access to engineers and technicians if any concerns were to arise. According to Lufthansa's CEO Carsten Spohr, the carrier will be receiving compensation from Airbus for current operation restrictions. The German airline carrier is expected to receive three more A320neos this year.

The plane was refused by Qatar Airways in January because it has had issues with its engine. The engine takes much longer than normal to cool down before it can re-start, which increases the

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amount of fuel being burnt. The Pratt and Whitney Pure Power PW1100G-JM engine is designed to reduce fuel consumption, but with the ongoing engine problems, not much fuel is being saved.

The engine has also had software issues, because of which incorrect messages are being sent to the cockpit, which create additional engine checkups ultimately delaying takeoff. Recently, the engine manufacturer has also found a new issue with the engine during a flight test: One of the bearing in the oil pump has seized while carrying out wind-milling tests on the plane.

Pratt and Whitney has recorded higher reliability of the engines at Lufthansa; according to the airline's CEO, more than 50% of the software issues in the engine have been improved, he stated: "A software fix from Pratt is in the works and there has been enormous progress in eliminating superfluous error messages." The engine manufacturers have also announced that all engine issues with the geared turbo fans will be solved latest by June this year. In a recent report by Credit Suisse, the research firm also disclosed that Pratt and Whitney looks confident in fixing its engine issues.

Even though Lufthansa has announced that it would fly two planes locally in Germany, it cannot afford to limit its aircraft to domestic routes. Regarding the limitation of the two planes Lufthansa spokeswoman said: "We cannot have more aircraft flying with these restrictions given our extensive network." The airline has a total of 116 A320neo plane orders.

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