



LUFTHANSA GOES ON CHARM OFFENSIVE WITH UNIONS

News / Airlines



Lufthansa has invited the main three **unions** representing its staff to a round table discussion on job and retirement schemes, as the carrier tries to improve relations with staff after damaging strikes.

The airline has asked unions representing pilots, cabin crew and ground staff to a meeting on December 2 to discuss retirement and pension schemes as well as job prospects at Lufthansa.

Lufthansa is trying to cut costs to better compete with low-cost carriers in Europe and leaner Gulf rivals on long-haul routes.

It is pushing expansion of low-cost subsidiary Eurowings over growth at Lufthansa and is trying to introduce new defined-contribution pension schemes and change a provision that allows crews to retire at 55.

But in a country known for its process of "Mitbestimmung", that involves workers in business decisions, the airline's unions have said they feel decisions have been taken without them and

management is unwilling to listen to staff, leading to strikes by both the pilots' and cabin crew union.

The cabin crew union staged a week of strikes earlier this month, costing the company tens of millions of euros and forcing the cancellation of about 4,700 flights. They have threatened further strikes should management not change its stance.

The Verdi union welcomed the invitation to talks, saying such a meeting was long overdue.

"Those starting a reorganisation of a company have to ensure the staff is with them," Christine Behle, an executive at Verdi said in a statement.

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