

Air France passengers grounded by strike

February 22 2018



After years of job cuts and other cost-cutting measures, Air France staff are demanding a 6% pay rise

Half of Air France's long-haul flights out of Paris were cancelled Thursday due to a strike over pay by pilots, cabin crew and ground staff.

The airline said it expected only 28 percent of the staff to walk off the

job, allowing it to maintain 75 percent of its service but only 50 percent of long-haul flights out of the French capital.

There were no reports of major disruptions at Charles de Gaulle or Orly airports Thursday morning.

Ahead of the [strike](#) the carrier advised travellers to postpone their trips until February 27 at no extra cost.

"Air France regrets this situation and is making every effort to minimize the inconvenience this strike action may cause to its customers," it said in a statement.

Salaries at Air France have been frozen since 2011.

After years of job cuts and other cost-cutting measures the staff are demanding a 6-percent pay increase.

Management has said that such an increase would be "irresponsible" at a time when it is attempting to lower its costs to compete with low-cost carriers such as Ryanair and Easyjet.

It is offering a basic increase of 1 percent and a top-up for ground staff.

A dozen trade unions representing various categories of workers have dismissed the offer as "small change" and threatened more strikes.

The Air France-KLM group, Europe's second-biggest airline which is 17.6 percent owned by the French state, has been plagued by strikes and labour disputes in its French operations in recent years.

Two French company executives had their shirts torn off in 2015 by workers protesting its plans to cut nearly 3,000 jobs.

In 2017, the airline's fortunes improved dramatically, with operating profits soaring 42 percent to 1.49 billion euros (\$1.84 billion), around one-third of which came from Air France.

Air France CEO Franck Turner said Wednesday that despite the improvement, the results still paled beside those of British Airways or Lufthansa and called for a "realistic balance" between rewarding [staff](#) for past sacrifices and setting aside money for ongoing investment.

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