



AIR TRAVELLERS RIOT AS PILOT TAKES OFF WITHOUT THEM AFTER TWO HOUR DELAY

News / Airlines



Police had to be called to Düsseldorf airport when around 70 passengers rioted after the pilot of their delayed flight took off without them, leaving them stranded on the tarmac, it has emerged.

The passengers had already been waiting two hours for their delayed flight to Dresden with Eurowings, a low-cost subsidiary of Lufthansa, on Friday evening.

But when a bus finally took them from the terminal to their aircraft, they arrived to see the steps being pulled back and the aircraft moving away.

“I saw the aircraft through the window and was surprised the stairs were no longer at the doors. Suddenly, the plane moved off,” Mathias Schirmer, one of the stranded passengers told Sächsische Zeitung newspaper.

The passengers were left to watch helpless as the plane headed towards the runway. To make matters worse, their bags had already been loaded and were reportedly flown to Dresden without them.

A spokesman for the airline later explained that the delay had pushed the flight close to a night-time ban on take-offs in Düsseldorf, and the pilot wanted to leave before the cut-off came into force.

“In consultation with air traffic control the pilot decided to fly at least some of the passengers to their destination. We will compensate the others,” the spokesman said.

The decision meant the flight took off with only around 40 passengers who had managed to get onto the first bus from the terminal building.

“We had to wait a quarter of an hour for the second bus. People crowded on in a hurry, it was incredibly tight,” Andre Wokittel, another of the passengers told Bild newspaper.

“We saw the plane take off without us, with our bags on board. Of course the mood immediately turned ugly on the bus. People started screaming and shoving, beating against the windows and cursing the bus driver.

“One woman was devastated because her insulin syringes were in her suitcase, others were furious, shouting and swearing.”

The bus driver returned to the gate, where according to reports the atmosphere became so heated passengers traded blows.

Ten police officers had to be sent to calm the situation. The passengers were forced to stay the night in Düsseldorf and put on another flight to Dresden the next day.

It is not clear whether the airline will face any sanctions for reportedly taking off with the passengers' baggage on board.

Flying with the baggage of passengers who are not on board is usually prohibited under security regulations designed to prevent terrorists smuggling bombs on board.

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