

GERMAN INQUIRY INTO RYANAIR PILOT WORK STATUS EXTENDED

News / Airlines



Authorities in Germany have increased the scope of their investigation into Ryanair's relationship with some of its pilots.

After the opening of an investigation last May, which involved raids on the apartments of three Ryanair pilots, the inquiry has grown to include about 50 pilots who fly with the airline but who are not officially Ryanair employees, registered instead with the UK agency Brookfield Aviation Limited.

According to the Süddeutsche Zeitung daily, German welfare authorities have now come on board to investigate whether the pilots really are self-employed.

In a letter to one pilot, GKV, an umbrella group for Germany's health insurers, noted the pilot wore a Ryanair uniform, was obliged to be on call 11 months of the year and had no right to refuse shifts. With "no notable self-employed activity" and "full availability" for Brookfield, this left indications of a classic employer-employee relationship, it said.

Majority

A ruling that the pilots were in effect employees could open the door to possible back-payments and fines for unpaid health insurance, social insurance, state pension contributions,

unemployment and accident/disability insurance. Ryanair said using contractor pilots was legal and widespread. A request for a comment from Brookfield met with no response.

The Ryanair Pilot Group welcomed the development and said nearly two-thirds operate on agency contracts, the majority of which are provided through Brookfield and involved hundreds of limited companies in the Republic of Ireland used to effectively disguise the true nature of the employment.

06 NOVEMBER 2015

SOURCE: THE IRISH TIMES

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