



Ryanair base closures are a declaration of war, say pilot union leaders

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Base closures and fleet reduction by Ryanair – perceived in some quarters as a punishment for the lawful industrial actions by pilots and cabin crew – are seen as a declaration of war to the crew across the whole network. There is concern that this latest development will seriously exacerbate the recent deterioration in the relationship between the airline and its pilots and cabin crew, which has already seen strike action in some countries. This message comes from the Presidents of European pilot unions and associations, who met last week in Vienna. The aggressive move by Ryanair management comes on top of already tense relations with its employees and stalling negotiations in numerous countries.

“Such hostility by management will not be tolerated by pilots and cabin crew,” says ECA President Dirk Polloczek, on behalf of union leaders from across Europe. “Pilot associations demand the immediate withdrawal of the base closures in Eindhoven (NL) and Bremen (DE) and downsizing of the Niederrhein base (DE). We call on Ryanair management and its Board of Directors to change its confrontational and counterproductive approach. It is hard to see how Ryanair can realistically expect to reach agreements with its unions with such threats hanging in the air.”

“Taking actions which force pilots and cabin crew to relocate or lose their job and income is definitely not what we need to build trust and a solid basis for constructive negotiations,” says Martin Locher, President of Vereinigung Cockpit (DE). “If Ryanair is serious about reaching agreements by Christmas, such behaviour is very unhelpful. The announced base closure date of 5th November will be a milestone to test management’s real intentions and its willingness to actually do something for its employees, be it in Germany, be it elsewhere.”

“Closing down a base and moving your employees to a different country is not compatible with social dialogue. We see it as a declaration of war, and totally contrary to all claims to be willing to negotiate,” says Arthur van den Hudding, President of the Dutch pilots’ association VNV. “If Ryanair management thinks that closing bases is a quick and cheap fix for the employee unrest – and the legal court cases against it here in the Netherlands – they would appear to be naïve at best and antagonistic at worst. Instilling fear among Ryanair workers and to *de facto* restrict their right to strike will never be tolerated by us. We call on Ryanair to maintain their base in the Netherlands, to face their responsibilities, and to come back to the negotiating table, rather than running away and punishing everybody left behind.”

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Note to editors: ECA is the representative body of European pilot associations, representing over 38.000 pilots from across Europe, striving for the highest levels of aviation safety and fostering social rights and quality employment for pilots in Europe. Website: www.eurocockpit.be & twitter [@eu_cockpit](https://twitter.com/eu_cockpit)