

28 February 2005

PRESS STATEMENT

IFALPA Deeply Troubled by Actions of Management of Bulgaria Air

On behalf of the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations, which represents in excess of 100,000 flight crew in more than 95 countries world-wide, we wish to state our great concern regarding the recent actions threatened by the management of Bulgaria Air against the pilots at this carrier.

On 25 February the management of Bulgaria Air gave notice through the Bulgarian Air Line Pilots Association (BUL-ALPA) to the carrier's pilots of management's intent to terminate the collective labour agreement between the parties, and to impose individual contracts on the pilots. Refusal to accept this ultimatum will result in the pilot being dismissed. This is in spite of a recent meeting between representatives of BUL-ALPA, IFALPA and Bulgaria Air management, in which BUL-ALPA pledged to work with management to address ongoing difficulties at the airline. At this meeting assurances were given by management that they wished to engage in these types of mutually beneficial discussions.

It is IFALPA's opinion that this type of action by management constitutes not only intimidation but also interference with the union's right to represent its members. Both of these actions are clear violations of Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This is especially troubling since Bulgaria is a signatory to the ILO Conventions and has thus pledged to abide by these provisions. Such conduct is even more astounding when one considers that Bulgaria is a candidate country for entry into the European Union (EU). It is widely understood that "Social Dialogue" between stakeholders is key to the operation of the EU, and that the Union does not tolerate such blatant disregard for collective agreements and the rights of labour.

IFALPA calls upon the management of Bulgaria Air to immediately stop these draconian practices and to negotiate in good faith with BUL-ALPA and the pilots of Bulgaria Air over any issues in dispute. We have written to the Minister of Transportation expressing our concerns and asking him to utilise his influence to bring the management of Bulgaria Air back to the negotiating table. IFALPA and its Member Associations will not turn a blind eye to such abusive conduct and will render whatever assistance we can to our colleagues at BUL-ALPA as they struggle for recognition of their basic human rights and workers' rights.

All queries and comments should be addressed to Bruce D'Ancey, IFALPA Executive Director.
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About IFALPA - The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 95 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. www.ifalpa.org