

VC - The Choice for Pilots in Germany



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FOR PILOTS, BY PILOTS

The German Airline Pilots' Association „Vereinigung Cockpit“ (VC) is an independent association led by pilots. Its success depends on the high degree of organization of its members within their airlines. The members of VC are employed by a wide variety of airlines throughout Germany such as large carriers, cargo operators, charter companies as well as small and regional airlines. VC safeguards the occupational interests of its members, improves their working and economic conditions, provides legal protection and helps in case of emergencies.

Out of VC's 9,600 members, around 150 are involved permanently in 18 technical working groups, providing vast expertise in all areas of aviation, such as training and licensing, accident analysis and prevention, aircraft design and operations, air traffic services, radiation protection, human factors, security, medical, legal or flight duty time and regulations. The members of these groups – whose experts are well known and respected, both nationally and internationally – are forming VC's professional backbone. They develop specific policies in their area of responsibility which are the guidelines of VC's technical and professional activities. Also, these policies form the building blocks for political lobbying on national and international level.

Since the rulemaking process gets shifted more and more to a European level, the participation of pilots in this process through the European Cockpit Association (ECA) – an organization which acts on behalf of over 38,000 ECA members in 37 European countries – as well as the International Federation of Air Line Pilots (IFALPA) becomes essential. Members of VC give a valuable input in working groups at ECA and IFALPA, where VC is the exclusive German member association.

FIVE GOOD REASONS TO JOIN

1. Safety is VC's top priority

For over four decades, VC deals with all technical and professional affairs occurring at airlines. In this context VC's objective lies in the promotion of flight safety. In all technical and professional matters VC's guideline was, is and will be: „Safety always comes first!“ Therefore, VC strongly promotes high technical and operational standards in aviation. VC examines guidelines and exerts its influence on regulatory frameworks – on national as well as on international level. Consequently, the findings of VC's technical and professional working groups are also included in the negotiation process of VC's company councils.

One example of VC's commitment to safety is the annually published list of airport shortcomings. It lists safety deficiencies of German airports and is prominently featured in the media. Through this list, a lot of airport improvements have already been implemented. Another example for VC's priority for safety is the offered quality assurance for licensing and training.

2. VC shapes collective working conditions

As a recognized union, VC organizes and negotiates collective agreements for pilots since 1999. Before, VC was part of the union „Deutsche Angestellten Gewerkschaft“ (DAG). The reason for leaving DAG was that on the one hand pilots were threatened to become a very small group within DAG's successor ver.di – a newly structured union consisting of five very diverse member unions from different industries, each one with a large number of members. As a consequence,

pilots' needs would not have been met within such a huge union, in which the majority of its members pursues different interests.

No doubt, pilots were always welcome as 'payers'. But when it came to financing industrial action the sympathy for the pilots had vanished. Nobody at DAG was willing to spend money for a strike of the union's best paying members. As a result, there had not been a single strike for more than a decade. Only after VC went its own way, pilots did start to negotiate effectively working conditions and to conclude a variety of significant collective agreements at major and smaller airlines as well as regional carriers.

3. Legal Protection

VC provides members with legal protection in all job-related matters, e.g. in case of a warning or discrimination, extraordinary or ordinary dismissal.

The German Constitution guarantees the individual's right to participate actively in a union. This includes the VC-members' right to take part in a legal industrial conflict. Legal measures, e.g. dismissal of an employee for being a member of VC or because of his participation in a strike, are also invalid.

In case strike actions are inevitable, VC compensates for possible wage-loss VC-members of the affected airline would suffer, in accordance to VC's by-laws. A precondition for this compensation is a VC-membership at least three months prior to the beginning of the strike measure.

4. VC is there for you in case of emergency

VC provides a "24/7"-hotline for its members. Should any member be involved in an incident or accident, or find himself in a disaster area this dedicated phone line makes it possible to stay in contact with VC and to get its best possible support. Should the need arise, VC can provide information on how to cope, organize support from one of VC's trained accident investigators from the technical working group "Accident Analysis and Prevention", put members in touch with the colleagues from the "Critical Incident and Stress Management" team, or – when abroad – make contact with one of VC's partner organizations for local assistance.

5. VC provides information

VC is quick in informing about all news affecting cockpit personnel, due to a vast and functioning national as well international network.

FOR MEMBERS

Through VC's website with its forums as well as through the direct exchange of information provided by VC's different bodies the pilot community gains first hand information in

technical and professional matters as well as in the industrial area of VC.

The quarterly membership magazine „VC-Info“ – which is written in German language – includes reports on current issues in the areas of technical and professional as well as industrial affairs, information from VC's legal department and from the executive board. Furthermore, the industrial department will – e.g. in case of an industrial conflict – publish newsletters.

FOR THE PUBLIC

The public highly respects VC as a union and as an organization with great expertise in all sorts of aviation matters, which also the airlines profit from. This means that whenever there is an accident or incident to report about, VC is consulted by the media. VC's spokesperson presents VC's opinions and views to the public through interviews, statements and press releases.

VC sincerely invites every airline pilot to contact or to visit VC, to ask all sorts of questions about its work or with regard to a VC-membership.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

VEREINIGUNG COCKPIT e.V.

Unterschweinstiege 10
60549 Frankfurt

phone: +49 / 69 / 69 59 76 - 0
Fax: +49 / 69 / 69 59 76 - 150
office@vcockpit.de
www.vcockpit.de