

# Aer Lingus doubles down on warning to withhold new aircraft amid pay row

Liam Coates April 17, 2024  
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Aviation

The airline has been embroiled in a pay dispute with pilots' union Ialpa

Aer Lingus has doubled down on warnings to withhold delivery of a plane and cast doubt over future new aircraft deliveries amid an [ongoing pay dispute with the largest pilots' union](#).

Last month, the airline's parent company, International Airlines Group (IAG) raised the prospect of reallocating aircraft if the pay dispute was not resolved by the April 22 Labour Court deadline.

Aer Lingus, led by chief executive Lynne Embleton, has today doubled down on withholding the delivery of the inaugural Airbus A321 XLR, and put a question mark over future deliveries.

The latest round of pay talks ended without agreement earlier this week, and the airline said it was "unlikely" that the new aircraft would be allocated to it in the "tight" window between now and April 22.

Aer Lingus also said that decisions on the remaining aircraft would be "required in the coming months", and that it was "assessing the implications of this for future jobs and investment in the business".

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Withholding new aircraft is seen as a common tactic to put pressure on pilots, [according to Andrew Lobbenberg](#), head of European Transport Equity Research at Barclays.

"The leverage that the companies can have is to play around with the allocation of aircraft capacity. And that is what we see playing out at IAG in the context of the Spanish airlines, but also of Aer Lingus," Lobbenberg told the *Business Post*.

Pilots depend on an expansion of the fleet for promotion to captain, especially on wide body aircraft, which command a higher salary than piloting their narrow-bodied counterparts.

In February, [pay talks between the airline and its pilots at the Workplace Relations Committee \(WRC\) broke down](#).

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It came after 98 per cent of pilots at the airline who are members of Ialpa, a branch of Fórsa trade union, voted against a pay offer based on the findings of an Aer Lingus pilot pay tribunal.

Pilots at the airline earlier this year [rejected a pay increase of 8.5 per cent](#), plus a 1.5 per cent ‘unconsolidated’, or once-off and non-pensionable pay measure, over three years recommended by the tribunal, which was chaired by Gerard Durcan SC.

Aer Lingus pilots in 2019 had agreed to forego an additional 3.75 per cent to fund the cost of improved crewing and lifestyle options.

Ialpa has sought an increase of what it says amounts to 23.88 per cent, while Aer Lingus says its demands actually equate to around 27 per cent.