

Aeroflot Ordered to Reinstate Union Leader

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Presnensky District Court has ordered Aeroflot to pay more than 2.2 million rubles (almost \$70,000) in compensation to 47 pilots.

A Moscow court has ordered Aeroflot, the country's largest airline, to pay compensation to and to reinstate a pilot who helped 46 other pilots win almost \$220,000 from the company for unpaid overtime.

The city's Presnensky District Court on Thursday ordered Aeroflot to pay more than 2.2 million rubles (\$69,000) to Igor Deldyuzhov, president of the Sheremetyevo Trade Union of Flight Personnel and a pilot who was fired from the airline in March, and to reinstate him, Deldyuzhov's aide Igor Obodkov told The Moscow Times.

Deldyuzhov was fired for repeatedly misstating the time at which he started work every day in reports to his bosses, Obodkov said.

Obodkov called the grounds for Deldyuzhov's dismissal "insignificant" and said they were a pretext for punishing him for his having fought to win compensation for other pilots.

Deldyuzhov, in his role as president of the Sheremetyevo Trade Union, helped win compensation from Aeroflot for 46 pilots who are members of the same trade union in a court case in June.

In that case, Moscow's Nagatinsky District Court ordered the airline to pay more than 7 million rubles (\$220,000) to the pilots in unpaid wages for working at night and in harmful or strenuous conditions, the Sheremetyevo Trade Union said in a statement in late August.

Deldyuzhov is to return to work Friday, according to the terms of Thursday's court ruling, Obodkov said.

Aeroflot said in an e-mailed statement that it would reinstate Deldyuzhov but would not allow him to fly. It was unclear what duties he would be given when he goes back to the company.

Aeroflot said that Thursday's court ruling was based on Deldyuzhov's activities in the trade union but failed to take into account the fact that the pilot was fired over "multiple violations of work discipline" that were "directly linked to flight safety and Aeroflot's responsibility for the lives and health of passengers."

Aeroflot said it will appeal Thursday's ruling.

Moscow courts have repeatedly fined Aeroflot's leadership based on findings of the city's transportation prosecutors for underpaying pilots for overtime. Prosecutors have conducted checks of the airline as a result of complaints by the Sheremetyevo Trade Union, Obodkov said.

In September 2010, Moscow's chief transportation prosecutor, Yevgeny Pospelov, said Aeroflot pilots work 200 to 300 hours more a year than is allowed by laws regulating flight safety, Gazeta.ru reported at the time.

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