

JETAIRFLY AND THE TUI PILOTS' GROUP

What is the TPG? The TUI Pilots' Group (TPG) is a group made up of union representatives from the Company Councils of all the TUI Group Airlines.

How do unions work in the TPG? Each of the airlines in the TUI Group, with the exception of Jetairfly recognises a national pilot trade union in their home country for the purposes of negotiating Terms and Conditions for all pilots in that Group Airline. Each of these national Trade Unions has a similar system with a Company Council (CC) for each airline being responsible for conducting union business within that airline on behalf of the national Trade Union. The CC in each airline is a group of individuals called Representatives (Reps) who are elected by the pilots in that airline who are union members. These Reps negotiate with management on behalf of all pilots in the airline regardless of whether or not they are union members. This is called Collective Bargaining.

How does Collective Bargaining work? The key point here is that every pilot in a national Group Airline will be on a basic contract that is the same as every other pilot. There may be some variations with some aspects of their contracts but these are usually only on the periphery. Things like leave, seniority, disciplinary, grievance, redundancy, capability, Flight Time Limitations, pay, allowances, Loss of Licence cover, Death in Service benefits, expenses and many other items will all be negotiated centrally by the CC and applied to all pilots equally. There is no divide and rule and the management cannot favour one over the other as a means of coercing or threatening pilots to do what management wants them to do.

How does what is negotiated centrally (collectively) become a contract? Each TUI Group airline, with the exception of Jetairfly has a Collective Labour Agreement (CLA). These may be called something else and some are totally renegotiated every few years, some are only renegotiated in part and only when needed or anything in between these two extremes. The central point remains however: CLAs are a part of your contract and cannot be changed by management without the agreement of the union.

Surely that's a bit hard on management? Why would they want to do that? It is only hard on a management who don't recognise that their most valued asset is their employees and one of the key groups in an airline is the people that actually fly the aeroplanes! A CLA is a very good way of both sides knowing where the limits are and avoiding disputes as a result. If there are clear guidelines, everybody knows not to overstep the mark. In other Group airlines management actually see the CCs as a good way to help leading pilots and communicating with them. Enlightened managements see CCs as a vital part of the business. Ill-informed managements see CCs and unions generally as a threat.

Is that true? Unions are just anti- business: The last thing any pilots' union wants is for the business to suffer. Why? Because we are the ones who will suffer most! Think about it. If your airline went out of business tomorrow, where could you go? What else could you do? If the same happened to just about anyone else in the airline business their chances of finding good employment somewhere else are considerably better than a pilot's – that's why we want to be a champion for the business, not a burden.

So if you're so proud to represent your airline, why not let management do what they want? Because management come under all sorts of other pressures. The principle purpose of all businesses and therefore all managers is to make money. Many managers have bonus payments that depend on hitting financial targets. That is a very powerful incentive for them to want to make you work 24/7/52 and pay you nothing. The reality is of course that we want to never go to work and be paid \$1 billion a week! At least.

Surely there has to be some middle ground? Yes there does and it is the job of the CCs and the managements to find it **together**. Without both sides **negotiating sensibly together** there would be a constant battle for supremacy. That way leads disaster. Option 1, the Great Britain of the 1970's, where workers were taking beds into car factories so they could sleep rather than work and unions went on strike when management tried to stop it. Option 2, a management who do what they want, when they want, unconstrained by any working agreements or CLA and operating at the very edge of the law. Neither option does either side any good. Which is closer to the truth in your airline.....?

But we don't have a union: That doesn't have to be a problem. There are plenty of examples around the world where workers are represented by non-union groups. The TPG doesn't have a problem with this; we recognise that unions are just another way of formally representing people in negotiations with management.

Why is this so important? Let's be honest here; every airline in the TUI Group has their pilots on a single basic contract, has a CLA of some sort and has a formal body of reps, elected by the pilots to represent them in discussions and negotiations with their managements. Every airline except Jetairfly. The Jetairfly management refuses to fall into line with the rest of the group and have a single, pilot elected / appointed body representing all pilots equally and without fear or favour. Why not? What are they scared of?

Good question. What is the thinking in Jetairfly management? The TPG met your CEO, Elie and your MD, Gunther last week. We invited them to a meeting we had in BRU and they kindly accepted. It didn't go so well after that:

Both were dismissive of unions and were adamant that everyone in JAF is happy, the proof being that nobody leaves. Where are you supposed to go?

They believe a small number of you are just trying to cause trouble. We maintain a small number of you are being exceptionally brave in challenging a management who are far too used to getting their own way.

We believe they are getting their own way through a culture of fear. They deny this and dismiss the evidence you provided in your recent survey. And so it goes on. You know all this better than we do!

What's the solution? Let's not be in any doubt here, it will take an enormous leap of faith by you all to bring about change. It will take an equally enormous leap of faith by your management.

The TPG is an alliance of representative bodies and we commit to helping you in every way possible. We have already formally raised concerns with Henrik Homann and Chris Browne. Dieter Nirschl, Head of Industrial Relations was in BRU this week and saw your managers in action. We don't think he was too impressed; we also think he was "encouraged" to be there by Henrik who thinks it "totally unacceptable" that at our meeting with him, Delphine felt unable to talk to him, in fear for her job. We will also be relaying the gist of the meeting and your open letter and survey results to all senior One Aviation managers. They will listen because they respect us as we respect them – exactly the way it must be.

We have sought and received assurances from senior managers that Delphine and anyone else who wishes to work towards full representation can speak freely and continue to work towards the single goal we all have for you, our colleagues in One Aviation – *a sensibly negotiated CLA, pilot elected representation in negotiations with management (non-union is entirely acceptable) and a common contract for all.*

Last year just one Belgian pilot could be heard. Last month it was two. Last week it was six. All very brave people. The TPG will work with and support them on behalf of all our colleagues in Belgium. Together we can bring about change with continued success for the company. Will you join us? The TPG welcomes you!