

German airport ground crews join strike

by UPI

BERLIN -- Ground crew workers at German airports joined a strike of public sector employees Wednesday, forcing the cancellation of many flights. Lufthansa encouraged domestic passengers to switch to rail, Deutsche Welle reported. Overseas flights were not affected. Frankfurt, Germany's busiest airport, was hit hard. The head of Verdi, the German public sector union, said about 2,000 baggage handlers, firefighters and check-in clerks had joined the walkout. The strike affected major trade fairs in Hanover and in Berlin. In the capital, bus, subway and tram drivers are on strike, leaving the railroad as the only public transportation and rail could shut down if the strike spreads. A spokeswoman for BVG, the Berlin transit agency, said that some limited service is available but that is only "a drop in the ocean." Mass transit also closed down in other areas. The public sector strike has affected many daycare centers, kindergartens and hospitals along with trash collection.

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