



LUFTHANSA WANTS TO DELAY TROUBLED BERLIN AIRPORT INAUGURATION

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The airlines company has asked to reschedule the date for opening Berlin's brand new airport to summer 2018. The airport, which cost taxpayers over five billion euros, has been delayed by over five years.

Speaking to Berlin's local public broadcaster RBB, Lufthansa's head of policy Thomas Kropp said it was unsuitable to open the airport with a tight flight schedule in winter, because snow and fog could pose considerable danger.

Lufthansa was also planning to start long-distance flights in the summer, which would not be possible from the smaller, more confined Tegel airport. Kropp said that Tegel was too small for planes flying long-distance and therefore it would make more sense to delay the new airport's inauguration by six months.

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Currently, the airport's stakeholders, including the states of Berlin and Brandenburg and the federal government, plan to start operations in winter 2017. The airport company FBB's spokesman Lars Wagner rejected Lufthansa's appeal, saying that the aim was to begin operations by the end of next year.

The Berlin-Brandenburg airport was originally scheduled to open in 2007, but construction disasters and controversies have repeatedly delayed its opening. The delay has also caused costs to spike up to 5.4 billion euros - nearly twice the initial estimate.

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