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Russia's Aeroflot Denies Having Biggest Pilot Gender Gap

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Russia's national carrier Aeroflot has disputed a recent ranking of global airlines' gender gaps among pilots, saying it has a higher ratio of women aviators than reported.

Aeroflot was ranked the last of 45 major airlines worldwide in the FromAtoB.com travel platform's study cited by Bloomberg last week, with 1.4% of its pilots being women. After initially counting 58 female pilots, Bloomberg appended Aeroflot's clarification that the airline employs 62 women pilots.

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"Aeroflot currently employs about 2,800 pilots and not 4,200 as claimed in the Bloomberg rating. Thus, the rating is hardly reliable," an Aeroflot spokesman told the Vedomosti business daily Sunday.

The new data would indicate that 2.2% of pilots at Russia's flagship airline are women. An average of 5.2% of pilots at the airlines surveyed are women, according to the FromAtoB.com study.

"When hiring pilots, Aeroflot provides equal opportunities to all candidates, and the main criterion is professionalism," Aeroflot said.

Working as a pilot in Russia "was considered masculine until recently, which is why there were practically no female pilots at [Russian] airlines," but the situation is changing, Vedomosti cited Aeroflot as saying.

Australia's regional carrier Qantas had the highest share of women in the cockpit with 11.6%.

The study's authors based their ranking on data from the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and the International Society of Women Airline Pilots (ISWAP).

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