

# Merkel to miss G20 start after plane woes



Fire engines can be seen standing by in this photo taken by a photojournalist onboard. (AAP)

A plane carrying German Chancellor Angela Merkel to the G20 summit in Argentina has been forced to land because of a technical problem.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel will likely be late to arrive at the G20 summit in Argentina after her plane has been forced to make an unscheduled landing in Cologne due to a technical defect.

The “Konrad Adenauer,” a four-engined Airbus A340-300 jet used by the government for official travel and diplomatic business, took off in Berlin but turned back over the Netherlands late on Thursday.

Around an hour into the trip, the captain told passengers he had decided to land at Cologne-Bonn airport in northwestern Germany after the “malfunction of several electronic systems”, but said there had been no security risk.

Merkel had at first hoped to board a replacement flight to continue the 15-hour flight to Argentina.

But her spokesman Steffen Seibert told journalists at Cologne Bonn Airport late on Thursday that Merkel will not be able to take a direct connecting flight due to scheduling issues with other government aircraft.

Merkel and her delegation were considering taking a scheduled commercial flight to Buenos Aires on Friday morning, Seibert added.

The resulting delay in Merkel’s arrival time would disrupt her planned schedule at the summit, where she had planned bilateral meetings with the presidents of the United States, China, Russia and India.

Aides were looking into rescheduling some of her meetings.

Merkel is to spend the night at a hotel in Bonn.

The fleet of German government aircraft has been prone to technical glitches in recent years.

The “Konrad Adenauer” was grounded in Indonesia last month after rodents gnawed through the cables of the government plane during the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

With Reuters

Source AAP

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