

Information release

Europe agrees on reform of air passenger rights after more than two decades

The agreement maintains compensation for delays of three hours or more, guarantees faster refunds, adjacent seats for children and their accompanying adult at no extra cost, and transparent pricing.

Madrid, 18 June 2026 – The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union have reached a political agreement to revise EU legislation on air passengers' rights, a reform that marks the first update to these rules in more than twenty years.

The agreement introduces improvements in areas such as complaint procedures, the information travellers must receive, protection for people with disabilities or reduced mobility, protection for minors, and a ban on so-called 'no-show' policies on return flights.

Right to compensation and procedures for making a claim

Passengers will be entitled to a refund of the ticket price or to be offered an alternative flight, as well as to claim compensation if a flight is delayed by more than three hours, if it is cancelled with less than 14 days' notice, or if they are denied boarding.

The new agreement will require airlines to inform passengers of their rights and the procedures for claiming compensation within a maximum of four days after the end of the journey. Furthermore, a nine-month deadline is set for submitting compensation claims, and airlines have 30 days to process and pay the relevant compensation, invoke extraordinary circumstances, explain why compensation will not be provided, and direct passengers to the procedures for making a claim. Passengers will not be required to have a user account or to use a specific app to receive this information.

As regards compensation, the agreement retains the current financial amounts for cancellations and delays exceeding three hours, which remain set at between 250 and 600 euros depending on the flight distance.

Furthermore, airlines may reduce compensation by 50 per cent for their longest routes if passengers are offered an alternative route to their final destination following the disruption or cancellation of their journey, or if the delay on arrival does not exceed four hours. However, airlines may avoid paying compensation if the delay or cancellation is due to circumstances beyond their control.

Extraordinary circumstances

The new rules include an open-ended list of such extraordinary circumstances, which include, for example, natural disasters, wars, weather conditions, disruptive passengers or strikes at airports, among air navigation services or ground handling service providers. Furthermore, greater clarity is introduced regarding the application of these rules, which will contribute to a more uniform interpretation across all Member States.

Prohibition on 'no-show' policies for return flights

Airlines will also be prohibited from preventing passengers from taking a return flight if they have not taken the outbound flight.

Right to assistance

In all cases, airlines will be obliged to assist passengers who are stranded, providing them with a snack every two hours of waiting, a meal after three hours and, if necessary in the event of prolonged delays, accommodation for a maximum of three nights.

Comparison of fares and hand luggage

The agreement enhances the transparency and comparability of fares and offers between airlines and booking platforms and recognises the right to travel – at no extra cost – with one personal item, such as a small bag or backpack.

Protection for vulnerable travellers

The new regulations also ensure that families with children under the age of 14 can travel in adjacent seats at no extra cost. The same right will apply to passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility, as well as to pregnant women.

The agreement improves protection for passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility. As a result, these passengers will be entitled to compensation, alternative travel arrangements and assistance from airlines if they miss a flight because they did not receive the necessary assistance to reach the boarding gate on time.

Boarding pass

The new rules will prohibit charges for correcting spelling mistakes in passengers' names or for a printed copy of the boarding pass after check-in. Passengers' right to receive digital boarding passes at check-in is also protected, without having to make an additional request or have a user account or a specific app. Furthermore, passengers will not be denied boarding simply because they are using their own printed copy of a digitally issued boarding pass.

Next steps

The agreement must be formally approved by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU before it is published in the Official Journal of the European Union. The new provisions will enter into force twelve months after their final adoption.

Source: [European Commission](#).