

## Information release

# The European Union is strengthening travellers' rights with new rules on package holidays

### The reform improving protection against cancellations, insolvency and delays, and enhancing transparency in the booking of package holidays, comes into force

*Madrid, 08 June 2026* – The European Union has recently adopted [Directive \(EU\) 2026/1024](#), which amends European legislation on package travel and package holiday services, with the aim of strengthening travellers' rights, increasing transparency in contracts and improving legal certainty for both consumers and businesses in the tourism sector.

The reform, which came into force on 28 May, addresses the difficulties identified during the COVID-19 pandemic, when millions of European travellers were affected by mass cancellations, delays in refunds and problems arising from the insolvency of tour operators. With this update, the European Union aims to provide greater protection against similar situations in the future.

One of the key changes in the new directive is a clearer definition of what constitutes a package holiday. In particular, protection is strengthened for bookings made online where several tourism service providers are involved. Thus, certain combinations of transport, accommodation or other services contracted through linked booking processes may be considered package holidays if they meet certain requirements, such as the transfer of the traveller's personal data between operators and the formalisation of contracts within a maximum of 24 hours. Consequently, the concept of 'linked travel arrangements', introduced by the previous directive of 2015, is abolished.

Furthermore, the regulations establish new information obligations for tour operators. Where additional services are offered that are not part of the contracted package, the consumer must be informed clearly and explicitly.

### Greater safeguards regarding the use of vouchers and refunds

The new regulations include specific rules on vouchers or coupons used as an alternative to refunds, a practice that became widespread during the pandemic. Travellers will have the right to refuse the voucher offered and request a refund of the amount paid within 14 days.

Furthermore, these vouchers will be valid for a maximum of 12 months, and consumers will be entitled to a refund for any unused or expired vouchers. Companies will also not be permitted to restrict the range of services available to holders of these vouchers.

### Extension of circumstances allowing for free cancellation

The directive expands the circumstances in which travellers may cancel a trip without incurring a penalty. From now on, not only will unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances arising at the destination be taken into account, but also those occurring at the point of departure or which may significantly affect the course of the trip.

These situations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with official travel advice issued by the relevant authorities serving as a reference.

### Clearer deadlines for complaints and insolvency

Another significant change is the introduction of specific deadlines for handling complaints. Travel organisers must acknowledge receipt of complaints submitted by consumers within a maximum of seven days and provide a reasoned response within a period not exceeding sixty days.

In the event of the organiser's insolvency, affected travellers must receive the corresponding refund through the guarantee mechanisms within a maximum of six months, extendable to nine months in particularly complex insolvency proceedings.

The reform also retains the current 14-day deadline for issuing refunds following travel cancellations.

During the parliamentary debate, the rapporteur for the initiative, Alex Agius Saliba, highlighted that the new rules will strengthen consumer protection in the event of extraordinary circumstances affecting any part of the journey, ensure that the acceptance of vouchers is always voluntary, and provide greater safeguards against company insolvency.

Source: [European Parliament](#)