

The EU top 10 for passengers : explanatory document

1. WHO TO CALL IN AN EMERGENCY

112 is the phone number that can be called to reach emergency services throughout the EU, from fixed or mobile phones, free of charge. It is available in all 27 Member States.

Some member States have introduced 112 as their main emergency number, while in most Member States, 112 operates alongside national emergency numbers. Each Member State is responsible for the organisation of its own emergency services and the response to 112 and national emergency calls. The Commission will continue to monitor the functioning of 112 in Member States to ensure it is operating properly.

For more information, visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/112/index_en.htm

2. AVOID ROAD ACCIDENTS

Every year 10,000 people die in road accidents in Europe due to drivers being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. One out of four accidents can be linked to excessive alcohol and drug consumption, even more so in the holiday period. The Commission adopted in January 2001 a recommendation for the level of alcohol permitted behind the wheel:

- 0.5 mg/ml in the blood for all drivers
- 0.2 mg/ml in the blood for novice drivers and professional drivers

This recommendation is not legally binding and therefore the permitted level of alcohol can vary across Member States (e.g. Sweden has adopted a zero-tolerance approach). Of course, the safest course of action is still to never drink and drive.

Especially young people are at risk on our roads. The Commission develops prevention and information measures and also co-finances campaigns managed by young people for young people to encourage them to stay away from alcohol and drugs.

The Commission has also provided €19 million – 80% of the total cost – to the DRUID project, which investigates the influence of psycho actives on driving a vehicle. For more about the project, visit <http://www.druid-project.eu/>

In spring 2010 the Commission will publish its road safety action plan for 2011-2020.

For more information on road safety, visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/index_en.htm

3. FLYING IN SAFETY

The list of airlines banned in the European Union acts as a strong incentive to remedy safety deficiencies. Withdrawal from the list is indeed possible, when the parties concerned put effectively in place sound corrective action to comply with all relevant safety standards. The concept of a Community list is increasingly proving to serve as a preventive rather than punitive instrument for safeguarding aviation safety. This is illustrated by the numerous instances where the Community has successfully addressed potential safety threats well ahead of resorting to the drastic measure of imposing restrictions. This list has greatly contributed to making Europe's skies safer and could be used to help gradually move towards an international strategy based on cooperation between countries around the world.

These airlines are not allowed to fly to or from the EU. However, the EU cannot prevent banned airlines from continuing to fly elsewhere in the world. If you are planning to take a flight which takes off and lands outside the EU, you may wish to check yourself the EU's blacklist to verify whether the airline in question is not banned from flying in the EU for safety reasons.

The list of banned airlines can be found here: <http://air-ban.europa.eu/>

4. SECURITY AT AIRPORTS

Air passengers can only take liquids with them in individual containers with a maximum capacity of 100 millilitres each. The total amount of liquid per person can not exceed 1 litre. These containers should be packed in one transparent, re-sealable plastic bag of not more than one litre capacity per passenger.

These restrictions are necessary as the threat stemming from liquid explosives unfortunately still exists. Until adequate technology to detect such explosives has been developed and deployed at airports, passengers are only allowed bringing liquids in small quantities or if these are really needed during the journey for example medicines or baby food. All other liquids have to be packed in the checked baggage.

A leaflet summarising the most important points of these rules can be downloaded at http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air/doc/security_2006_aviation_security_new_rules_poster.pdf.

More information is also available from the airline or the transport.

5. WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR FLIGHT IS CANCELLED OR YOU ARE DENIED BOARDING

Before going to the airport, check the time of departure (flights can be rescheduled). If your flight is cancelled or in case you are denied boarding, ask for reimbursement of the full cost of the unused ticket or segments, or rerouting to the final destination at the earliest convenience. You may also be entitled to compensation between €250 and €600 depending on the flight distance and the delays incurred when rerouted. Furthermore, the airline should inform you about your rights and the reason for the cancellation or the denied boarding. It should also provide you with assistance in relation to the waiting time (meals, drinks, communication facilities and a hotel room for the night, if necessary).

If passengers feel airlines do not respond in a satisfactory manner to their complaints, they can lodge a complaint to the national enforcement body in the EU Member State (or in Iceland, Switzerland and Norway) where the incident happened. When the incident concerned an EU airline and it took place outside of an EU Member State, the passenger can lodge a complaint in the EU Member State of destination.

A list of these bodies can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passengers/air/air_en.htm.

The right to compensation in the case of the cancellation of a journey and delays is also included in legislation to protect the rights of rail passengers coming into force on 3 December 2009, subject to conditions.

The Commission presented in December 2008 two proposals to protect the rights of passengers travelling by water or by bus/coach. Once in force, the regulations will give these passengers the right to compensation in the event of cancellation of journeys.

For more about passenger rights – including the right to reimbursement – visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passengers/index_en.htm

6. INFLUENZA A (H1N1) AND DENIED BOARDING

If you are denied boarding because you are a suspected case of Influenza A (H1N1) and the measure is neither based on a decision of a sanitary authority or a medical certificate, you should be entitled to reimbursement or rerouting as well as compensation. In other words, the decision to deny boarding should not be purely based on a discretionary and unilateral decision taken by the airline.

For the latest information on Influenza A (H1N1), visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/com/Influenza/novelflu_en.htm

7. DISABLE PERSONS AND PASSENGERS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

The non-discrimination of disabled persons and passengers with reduced mobility because of any permanent or temporary handicap is guaranteed for air passengers under existing EC regulation and for rail passengers under legislation coming into force on 3 December 2009. In December 2008 the Commission presented proposals to protect the rights of persons with reduced mobility travelling by water or by bus/coach.

You are invited to notify the need for assistance to the airline or to the tour operator at least 48 hours before the flight departure. The Managing bodies of airports will be informed accordingly and shall be responsible to provide assistance up to the aircraft gate; then assistance is to be provided by the airlines. The assistance is free of charge.

To find out more about the rights of passengers with reduced mobility, visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passengers/air/prm_en.htm

8. WEB SITE PRICE TRANSPARENCY

Applying full price transparency is an obligation under the air services regulation. This means that when consumers book a flight ticket online, the final "comprehensive" price must be available since the initial page, enabling people to compare prices across airlines and make a real choice. In case of optional price supplements, they have to be indicated in a clear and transparent manner. All passengers have the right to equal access to air fares without any discrimination based on their nationality or their place of residence or on the place of establishment of the carrier's agent.

The Commission continues to monitor (with the assistance of Member States enforcement authorities) airline ticket selling websites across Europe for compliance with consumer protection rules and has been instrumental in getting companies to improve their standards.

The Commission has also compiled a list of banned practices such as falsely creating the impression of free offers.

For more information please consult the articles 22 and 23 of the Regulation on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sqa_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=en&numdoc=308R1008

In addition, other bans are available at <http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/rights/>

9. LOST AND DAMAGED BAGGAGES

In the event of damage, you should complain to the airline within seven days and in the case of delay within 21 days from the moment when the baggage was placed at your disposal. Any other action in court must be brought within two years from the date of arrival. You can get reimbursed up to € 1,100 by the airline company in case your luggage is lost or damaged. If you carry expensive items you should subscribe for private travel insurance, or you can benefit from a higher liability limit by making a special declaration at the latest at check-in and by paying a supplementary fee. In case of difficulties with the airline concerned it is advisable to refer to the national consumers' association in your country or to the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net).

The Commission launched a survey this year to assess lost baggage figures in air transport, which revealed the number of bags delayed at the airport between January 2008 and October 2008 in the European Union amounted to 4.6 million. In 2008 32.8 million pieces of baggage were reported lost around the world, which amounts to a decrease of 20% compared to 2007 (42.4 million). Although the number of lost bags is finally decreasing following five years of growth, the Commission still considers it excessive and unacceptable. It is closely monitoring the situation and will undertake all needed actions, including regulatory initiatives if necessary, to improve the current situation.

For more information please consult the Regulation on air carrier liability in the event of accidents:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32002R0889:EN:HTML>

10. TRAVEL PACKAGE

When consumers buy a travel package, they are entitled to know what they are paying for and what is included in the package deal under Council Directive 90/314/EEC of 13 June 1990 on package travel, package holidays and package tours. Any brochure made available to consumers must indicate clearly and accurately the price and all relevant information, such as destination, itinerary and the means of transport used, type of accommodation, meal plan, passport and visa requirements, health formalities, timetable for payment and the deadline for informing consumers in the event of cancellation.

To find out more about the directive, visit:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31990L0314:EN:HTML>

WHAT ARE YOUR PASSENGER RIGHTS AND HOW CAN YOU COMPLAIN

If you have an enquiry about your rights and where to complain, you can write to:

EuropeDirect:

http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm

Free phone number from anywhere in the EU: 00800 67 89 10 11

Vice President Tajani emergency email:

http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm

European Consumers Centre (ECC) Network which can help you with questions and any other problems you may have as a consumer in Europe. For further information on ECCs including access to your own country's ECC:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/redress_cons/index_en

More information and a list of the national authorities responsible for enforcing these rights are available at: <http://apr.europa.eu>

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EU's Top 10 for passengers

1. In the event of an accident, call for free the European number 112, which covers the whole territory of the European Union.
2. Keep in mind that one out of four road accidents can be attributed to excessive alcohol or drug consumption. Don't drive if you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs!
3. If you are planning to travel outside Europe, check the black list of airlines banned in the European Union before buying your ticket.
4. When you check in at the airport, only take small quantities of liquids in your hand luggage (a maximum of 100 millilitres is permitted per container). The total amount of liquids per person cannot exceed one litre.
5. If your flight is cancelled without notice or if you are denied boarding, ask for reimbursement or rerouting. You also have the right to assistance as well as monetary compensation according to the length of your trip.
6. If you are denied boarding because you are suspected to have Influenza A(H1N1), be aware that you are entitled to reimbursement or rerouting combined with monetary compensation if the measure was not based on a decision of a sanitary authority or on a medical certificate.
7. If you are an air passenger with disabilities or reduced mobility, you are not allowed to be discriminated. You have the right to free assistance before, during and after your travel.
8. When you book your flight ticket online, remember that the final price must be clearly indicated on the first page.
9. If your luggage gets lost or damaged, you have the right to a reimbursement of up to € 1,100. Don't forget you have only one week to claim if your luggage is damaged and 21 days if it is delayed.
10. When you buy a travel package, always make sure that both the price and all relevant information are clearly indicated.

What are my rights and how do I complain?

For questions concerning your rights and where to complain, you can contact EuropeDirect (http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm - Free phone number from anywhere in the EU: 00800 67 89 10 11), or the Vice President Tajani's emergency email (CAB-TAJANI-WEBPAGE@ec.europa.eu).

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