

Air passenger rights

2013/0072(COD) - 07/07/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, 3rd reading

The European Parliament adopted by 646 votes to 12, with 3 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the **joint text** approved by the Conciliation Committee for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation or long delay of flights and Regulation (EC) No 2027/97 on air carrier liability in respect of the carriage of passengers and their baggage by air.

The main points of the agreement reached are as follows:

Delays and cancellations

The regulation maintains the fundamental right of passengers to be **reimbursed or re-routed** in case of cancellation. Passengers will also continue to be able to **claim compensation** for delays of **more than three hours**, if a flight is cancelled less than 14 days in advance, or if a passenger is denied boarding.

Compensation levels for delayed or cancelled flights are maintained and will depend on flight distance: **EUR 250** for journeys up to 1 500 km, **EUR 400** for intra-EU journeys of more than 1 500 km and other journeys between 1 500 km and 3 500 km, and **EUR 600** for all other longer journeys.

Air carriers will have the possibility to **reduce compensation by 50%** for their longest journeys if passengers are offered re-routing to their final destination following travel disruption, or if the delay at arrival does not last more than four hours.

If a plane lands at a different airport than planned, airlines are required to provide a **transfer to the original airport of arrival** and if passengers arrive more than three hours late at the original airport, they are entitled to compensation.

Extraordinary circumstances

Air carriers may be exempt from paying compensation if the delay or cancellation results from circumstances beyond their control. A **non-exhaustive list** of extraordinary circumstances has been introduced, including natural disasters, war, adverse weather conditions, unruly passengers, and strikes by airport staff, air navigation service providers, or ground handling service providers. This list strictly adheres to the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The regulation confirms that any extraordinary circumstances must be **beyond the control of the airline**, directly linked to the flight and that all reasonable measures must have been taken to avoid the disruption in order for the disruption to count as an extraordinary circumstance. Airlines must inform passengers of exactly which extraordinary circumstance they are citing when refusing to pay compensation.

Obligation to inform a passenger of their right to compensation

After a disruption, airlines must send information digitally to each passenger about their potential right to compensation and clear instructions on how to claim it. This obligation was not included in the original proposal and will greatly increase passengers' awareness of their rights. Passengers affected by a disruption will receive clear instructions on how to claim compensation within **four days** of the end of their journey.

Compensation claims must be submitted by the passenger within **nine months** of the actual departure date indicated on the passenger's ticket. Within **thirty days** of the claim being submitted, the carrier must either pay the compensation or provide the passenger with a justification for non-payment, in which case information on the complaints process must be provided.

Clear rules on vouchers are introduced. Parliament guaranteed that they will be voluntary, that they could be more than the amount of the reimbursement or compensation due, and that, after they expire, all remaining amounts are refunded to the passenger's bank account.

Passenger rights

Parliament introduced the right for passengers to:

- take the **return flight** of a two-way ticket even if they did not use the first flight, without incurring an additional fee;
- bring **one personal item on board**, without extra cost, one personal item, such as a small bag or backpack. In addition to a personal item, all listings of airfare offers must, by default, include **a piece of hand baggage** in the price shown. Passengers are allowed to bring their musical instruments with them on a flight, including on a seat where needed;
- choose to use either a **digital or physical boarding pass free of charge**. Airlines cannot require a user account or the use of an application to access, use or print a boarding pass or any other information related to this Regulation.

Typos and errors in a passenger's name can now be corrected for free when spotted at least 48 hours before a journey and should not be considered a ground to deny boarding.

Vulnerable passengers

Parliament has succeeded in including a right to compensation and assistance for **passengers with disabilities** or reduced mobility, and for **unaccompanied minors**, who experience delays or miss connections because the assistance they requested was not provided. People with disabilities or reduced mobility will also be entitled to clearer compensation and replacement of equipment damaged during a journey.

Furthermore, airlines will be required to allow **children under 14** to sit next to their parents free of charge. Priority boarding must be given to children in strollers.

Air Passenger Rights Label

A 'Union Air Passenger Rights Label' is hereby established. This label will allow passengers to be quickly informed of the application of this regulation to a journey, thus facilitating comparison and choice between ticket offers. The label will only appear next to journeys performed by Union carriers, as they are obliged to apply the Regulation when departing from, and arriving in the Union.