Air transport: rights of persons with reduced mobility

2005/0007(COD) - 16/02/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to strengthen the rights of persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: This proposal is limited to areas where precise Community rules are necessary, and indeed desired by stakeholders. It would prohibit air carriers or tour operators from refusing persons with reduced mobility carriage on the grounds of reduced mobility - apart from certain exceptions and derogations notably for justified safety reasons established by law.

The proposal lists assistance to be given at airports and on-board aircraft, but does not define it in detail nor specify how it should be provided, nor would it cover other topics like facilities on-board the aircraft.

The regulation would guarantee assistance not only in moving from the check-in counter to the aircraft and from the aircraft to the baggage hall, usually the practice at present, but also from a designated point of arrival at the airport to the aircraft and from the aircraft to a designated point of departure from the airport. Giving responsibility to one body at each airport would create the conditions for seamless service, without interruptions and delays, even when a passenger changes carriers and is transferred between terminals.

The solution proposed involves a charge being levied on each airline that would be proportional to the total quantity of passengers that it embarked and disembarked at an airport. The charge would be independent of the number of passengers with reduced mobility carried, so that the airline would little economic incentive to reduce their numbers.

The proposed Regulation requires air carriers to provide assistance on-board aircraft specified in its Annex II, free of charge to persons with reduced mobility. It also requires air carriers and tour operators to make certain arrangements concerning prior notification of the need for assistance.