

**Contact:** Jasper Dober: [press@beuc.eu](mailto:press@beuc.eu) | Tel: +32 (0)2 743 15 90  
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### The EU can do better to protect passengers and their rights

Today, the European Commission published the long-awaited **Passenger Mobility Package**<sup>1</sup> which includes **Passenger Rights** initiatives and a proposal for a revised **Package Travel Directive**. These important files could secure more rights for passengers and holidaymakers when travelling and booking package travel. BEUC welcomes the intention to update EU passenger rights and ensure their enforcement. However, some of today's proposals are not enough.

On the **passenger rights** initiatives, BEUC is disappointed that key points are missing, namely an insolvency protection scheme for consumers in case airlines go bankrupt and a right for consumers to cancel their tickets free of charge in times of crisis. These issues were considered by the European Commission but have regrettably been left out which is bad news for consumers given the exposure to high financial losses when something goes wrong.

On **multimodal passenger rights**, the policy measures proposed today are a missed opportunity to empower and protect consumers when combining transport modes. This despite a clear need to establish basic traveller rights in law (information, care and assistance, re-routing) for all types of combined journeys.

On **enforcement**, despite plenty of evidence of passenger rights violations by carriers, no game-changing measure is proposed that would enable consumers to easily assert their rights. Introducing a standardised refund and compensation form for all modes of transport, and stricter reporting obligations on transport operators to authorities, is welcome but not sufficient.

The most relevant step forward in the new initiatives is on **online booking intermediaries**, where clear refund rules are proposed to stop consumer claims being subject to endless ping-pong between carriers and intermediaries.

On the **Package Travel Directive**, the proposal to limit the amount of pre-payments that travel agencies can demand consumers before holidays is very much supported by BEUC. This will benefit consumers by limiting financial losses and help travellers get refunded in case things go wrong. Furthermore, BEUC supports the Commission's efforts to clarify travel warnings in times

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<sup>1</sup> **Multimodal passenger rights:** Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on passenger rights in the context of multimodal journeys.

**Enforcement of passenger rights:** Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EC) No 261/2004, (EC) No 1107/2006, (EU) No 1177/2010, (EU) No 181/2011 and (EU) 2021/782 as regards enforcement of passenger rights in the Union.

**Package Travel Directive:** Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive (EU) 2015/2302 to make the protection of travellers more effective and to simplify and clarify certain aspects of the Directive.

of crisis, as well as the proposed minimum requirements for vouchers that will be voluntary for consumers, insolvency protected, and refundable. These changes reflect lessons learnt from the pandemic. However, BEUC deplors the absence of stronger rules on enforcement and redress that are urgently needed to ensure laws are respected in the package travel sector.

**Ursula Pahl, BEUC Deputy Director General, commented:**

“When travelling, passengers are too often faced with cancellations and delays, and struggle to get their tickets refunded on time or receive the financial compensation they are entitled to. Today’s proposals are a small step in the right direction to ensure consumers are better protected from malpractices by carriers or when things go wrong.

“Measures to fix well-known and long-standing issues detrimental to travellers, such as the lack of consumer protection when an airline goes bankrupt, have not been addressed and are postponed once again. Introducing the right for passengers to cancel their tickets for free in times of crisis is another outstanding consumer request, which has again been left aside despite an obvious need for action.

“On the other hand, BEUC welcomes the proposal for a revised Package Travel Directive as a positive step to guarantee robust consumer protection by securing holidaymakers’ pre-payments, clarifying rules on insolvency protection, and introducing laws to ensure consumers are refunded on time.”

**Documentation**

- [Consumer checklist on passenger and holidaymaker rights](#)
- [Position paper on passenger rights](#)
- [Factsheet on the package travel directive](#)
- [Position paper on the package travel directive](#)

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