

Contact: François Jeanneteau: press@beuc.eu | Tel: +32 (0)2 743 15 90
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Hand luggage fees: consumer groups regret EU Commission's challenge of Spain airlines fines

Today, the European Commission opened a rule-breaking [procedure](#) against the Spanish government for [fining](#) five airlines (1) for their unfair hand-luggage pricing practices in May 2024. The overall fine amounted to €179 million. This decision takes place while Spanish courts are yet to give their decision on Ryanair's ongoing appeal of the fine.

Agustín Reyna, Director General of BEUC, commented:

“Seeing the Commission taking sides with airlines is disappointing for consumers, who expect their hand-luggage to be included in their flight ticket price. Those surcharges pushed us to ask for an EU-wide investigation into airlines’ hand-luggage unfair practices last May. The European Commission is burning bridges by taking action before the national proceedings conclude.

“With this move, the Commission is basically telling EU consumers that hand-luggage is a luxury item that needs to be paid for. It goes in the opposite direction of the European Parliament's proposal that consumers could bring both a piece of hand-luggage and a small personal item onboard for free. We count on policymakers to tend to consumers’ expectations as they are modernising rules on air passenger rights rules.”

For more information:

- Our [Fly light, pay heavy enforcement action](#) launched in May 2025.
- Our [Dutch member Consumentenbond's study](#) February 2025: 86% of surveyed consumers thought they should be allowed to bring a piece of hand-luggage (e.g. a trolley, backpack, or a suitcase) alongside a small personal item for free.
- The EU Court of Justice [ruled in 2014](#) that “carriage of hand baggage cannot be made subject to a price supplement, provided that it meets reasonable requirements in terms of its weight and dimensions and complies with applicable security requirements”.

- Our Spanish member OCU (Organización de Consumidores y Usuarios) launched a formal complaint to the Spanish Ministry of Social Rights and Consumption who [ultimately fined five airlines](#) €179 million for abusive hand baggage practices in late 2024.
- Other national cases: Our Belgian member Testachats/Testaankoop also [filed a complaint](#) to the Belgian authorities in May 2024 and our Portuguese member DECO did the same in Portugal. Testachats/Testaankoop launched a [court action](#) against Ryanair for their unlawful hand baggage policy in June 2025.

(1) Ryanair, Vueling, Easyjet, Norwegian Airlines and Volotea

BEUC, The European Consumer Organisation

Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs AISBL | Der Europäische Verbraucherverband
Rue d'Arlon 80, B-1040 Brussels • Tel. +32 (0)2 743 15 90 • www.twitter.com/beuc • www.beuc.eu
EC register for interest representatives: identification number 9505781573-45



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