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## **Air travel vote: MEPs to fasten passengers' rights**

Flights lengthily delayed or cancelled, over-zealous luggage restrictions, tricky website booking processes, difficulties with compensation claims against airlines, families stranded abroad leading to hassle and significant expense... just some of the recent trends of air travel the European Parliament has an opportunity to address in a key vote tomorrow, December 17.

EU air passengers' rights and airline obligations as set out in 'Regulation 261' of 2004 are under review and the Transport Committee leading the Parliament's work votes tomorrow to shape the law for years to come.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation said:

"The air transport sector is top of the chart of consumer problems in Europe. Too many airlines are simply not doing what they know they should when their service fails, namely providing assistance, communication and compensation. Individual consumers can do very little to enforce their rights. This parliamentary vote is the junction for positive change.

"As it stands, the Commission's proposal will barely improve travellers' rights and the present reality that they are not being realised when flights are delayed or cancelled. MEPs have an opportunity to point it in the right direction. They should begin with the right to financial compensation which should kick in after 3 hours delay at destination, regardless of the length of the flight. This has been systematically ruled by the European Court of Justice.

"The suggestion has been to limit the crucial right to accommodation when stranded in 'extraordinary circumstances' to 3 days and €100 per night. This would be unfair to passengers. Think of the costs to a family of 4 stuck abroad having to pay for hotels and food. It is the airline's duty to get them home safely and speedily. The consumer protection of accommodation should not be lessened.

"Notorious 'no-show' clauses, where return flights are voided if you miss the outbound trip or take alternative travel, must be banned. They add extortionate expense to travel and we know of no similar business practice where something you have paid for can be just taken from you.

"The Commission has turned a blind eye to several years of European Court of Justice judgments which back consumers. It is time for airlines to wake up to their responsibilities. We hope MEPs will stay strong in the face of this and vote for passenger rights to be improved and better enforced."

ENDS

You can find BEUC's Factsheet on EU air passengers' rights [here](#).