

Air passenger rights

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The Council held a policy debate on a proposed update of the EU rules on air passenger rights.

Clarifying grey areas in existing legislation: Ministers generally agreed about the need to clarify the current rules. Several ministers underlined that the most important goal for passengers is to get to their destination and receive proper care and attention.

Most of them stressed the importance of striking the right balance between the rights of passengers and the need to avoid disproportionate costs for air carriers, thus preserving the competitiveness of EU airlines.

Addressing the disproportionate costs that some obligations may impose on air carriers in the event of delayed or cancelled flights: most ministers expressed their opposition to linking the amount of compensation to the ticket price in the event of a delay, mentioning reasons such as (i) the volatility of ticket prices, (ii) the difficulty of determining the price of tickets which are part of a package and (iii) the principle of non-discrimination. A number of ministers considered instead that the basis for compensation should be the harm caused to the passenger and that compensation should not be an end in itself.

Several ministers were of the view that **if the air carrier operating the first part of a combination flight is delayed, it should be the one to pay compensation.**

Ministers also cautioned against rules that would encourage companies to limit their offer of combination flights or even to cancel flights.

According to some ministers the provisions as proposed by the Commission still need further clarification. Ministers' contributions will guide further examination of the proposal in the Council preparatory bodies.