

## **Board on disputes relating to scheduled planes**

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### Structure

The Board is established in agreement between the Consumer Council on the one hand, and Norsk Reiselivsforum (The Norwegian Trade Forum Industry, which organises i.a. travel agencies) and the air companies SAS Airline Norge ANS, Braathens ASA and Widerøes Flyveselskap ASA on the other.

It is composed of chairman, appointed by agreement between the parties, and four members, of which two are appointed by the Consumer Council, and two by the other parties.

### Powers

The Board has a mandate to handle complaints from consumers concerning scheduled planes rendered by the three air companies that are parties to the agreement, and related services that are rendered by travel agencies that are members of "Norsk Reiselivsforum".

The chairman may reject a case if it is considered unfit for handling by the Board. A case may be rejected if it requires oral statements from the parties.

### Procedure

Before the dispute can be taken up, the plaintiff must have submitted a written complaint to the air company/travel agency in question, without achieving an amicable settlement. Cases shall be brought before the Board in writing. This must be done no later than four weeks after the consumer has received a final reply to his complaint from the opposite party, given that this reaction includes information on the possibility of bringing the case before the Board, and on the time limit. In any event, the case must be brought before the Board six months at the latest after the last letter from air company/travel agency was received. The secretariat shall provide the information necessary for the handling of the case, and present the case to the defendant.

The secretariat may put forward a proposal for an amicable settlement or present an evaluation of the case on the basis of previous decisions made by the Board in similar cases. The Board shall consider the case on the basis of the documentation submitted and the original documents of the case. The report shall include the decision and possible dissents, which shall be reasoned. The Board may resume a closed case if new information or evidence is presented, given that it is considered probable that this information or evidence might have led to another decision.

## Costs

The handling of cases is free of charge for the consumer. The air companies cover the expenses for the secretariat. The parties to the agreement cover possible salary and expenses for their respective representatives to the Board. Salary and expenses for the chairman are shared between the parties of the agreement.

## Nature of the decision/enforcement

The decisions of the Board are in principle advisory. The parties to the agreement (the three air companies and members of "Norsk Reiselivsforum") are, however, committed to comply with the decision. They may, in special situations, if the case has a distinct fundamental significance, notify the secretariat within 3 weeks that they do not accept to abide by the decision.