



COVID-19: Commission provides guidance on EU passenger rights

Brussels, 18 March 2020

In our efforts to mitigate the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has today published [guidelines](#) to ensure EU passenger rights are applied in a coherent manner across the EU.

National governments have introduced different measures, including travel restrictions and border controls. The purpose of these guidelines is to reassure passengers that their rights are protected.

Commissioner for Transport Adina **Vălean** said: *"In light of the mass cancellations and delays passengers and transport operators face due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission wants to provide legal certainty on how to apply EU passenger rights. In case of cancellations the transport provider must reimburse or re-route the passengers. If passengers themselves decide to cancel their journeys, reimbursement of the ticket depends on its type, and companies may offer vouchers for subsequent use. Today's guidelines will provide much-needed legal certainty on how to apply EU passenger rights in a coordinated manner across our Union. We continue to monitor the rapidly evolving situation, and, if need be, further steps will be taken."*

This guidance will help passengers, the industry and national authorities in this unprecedented situation, with important passenger travel restrictions imposed by national governments and knock-on effects on transport services across the EU. By introducing clarity, the guidelines are also expected to help reduce costs for the transport sector, which is heavily affected by the outbreak. The guidelines cover the rights of passengers when travelling by air, rail, ship or bus/coach, maritime and inland waterways, as well as the corresponding obligations for carriers.

If passengers face the cancellation of their journey, for example, they can choose between reimbursement of the ticket price or re-routing to reach their final destination at a later stage. At the same time, the guidelines clarify that the current circumstances are "extraordinary", with the consequence that certain rights – such as compensation in case of flight cancellation less than two weeks from departure date – may not be invoked.

Background

The EU is the only area in the world where citizens are protected by a full set of passenger rights – whether they travel by air, rail, ship, bus or coach. Carriers have to offer reimbursement (refund of tickets) or re-routing to passengers whose service has been cancelled. Carriers must also offer care in terms of meals and accommodation. In respect of compensation, the rules differ between transport modes.

More Information

[Interpretative Guidelines on EU passenger rights regulations in the context of the developing situation with Covid-19](#)

[EU Passenger Rights](#)

[Overview of national measures by country](#)

[EU response to Coronavirus outbreak](#)

#coronavirus

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