



Consumer protection: major online travel agencies commit to refund within 14 days for cancelled flights

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Following a dialogue with the European Commission and national consumer authorities (CPC network), Edreams ODIGEO, Etraveli Group and Kiwi.com **committed to better inform consumers of their rights in case of flight cancellations** by airlines and to transfer ticket refunds within seven days after receiving them from the airlines, meaning that consumers should receive them after a total of 14 days.

Under [EU passenger rights](#), airlines cancelling a flight are required to refund tickets within seven days once the passenger has opted to have the flight reimbursed. However, airline tickets can also be bought through an intermediary (an 'online travel agency'). As a result of this dialogue, the three major European airline intermediaries provide clarity for such cases: **consumers will receive their refund within 14 days** maximum. This step also helps create a fair and level playing field within the travel airline industry.

This action complements a previous dialogue with 16 major European airlines that resulted in [those airlines committing to respect the 7-day time limit](#) for reimbursements, and reimbursing over 500,000 flight vouchers that they had imposed on consumers following flight cancellations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 dialogue with the airlines had cast a spotlight on additional delays experienced by consumers when cancelled tickets had been purchased through an intermediary.

Overview of commitments

The online travel agencies concerned by the action are: **eDreams ODIGEO** (with brands such as eDreams, Opodo, Go Voyages, Travellink, and Liligo); **Etraveli Group** (with brands such as Mytrip, GotoGate, Flybillet, Flightnetwork, Supersavetravel, seat24 and Travelstart); and **Kiwi.com**. The action originally also addressed Otravo that, however, ceased operations in December 2022.

Following the dialogue, the online travel agencies made the following commitments:

- In case of cancelled flights, the online travel agencies will **transfer refunds from the airline on to the consumer within 7 days from the day the online travel agency receives the refund from the airline**. This will result in a refund in 14 days for consumers having bought their ticket through an online travel agency. Remaining **backlogs** in transferring refunds received from airlines have been or will be **cleared by 30 June 2023** at the latest.
- The online **travel agencies' telephone number and e-mail address will be provided** in or via the support or 'contact us' sections of their websites – so that consumers can communicate with them also via e-mail or telephone.
- **Information on the specific benefits** linked to different service packages offered by the online travel agencies will be made clearer for consumers.
- Consumers will be **clearly informed about their statutory rights under the Air Passenger Rights Regulation** to rerouting or reimbursement in cases where the airline cancels their flights. They will also be clearly informed if the flight was cancelled.
- Consumers will be **clearly informed about the consequences** that specific services offered by airline intermediaries can have **on the consumer's rights in the event of a flight disruption** (e.g. that contact details may not have been transferred to the airlines, or that when only one leg of a trip is cancelled, the second leg may still have to be paid where there is no interlink between the flights constituting the journey).

The three major European airline intermediaries agreed to introduce the changes to its practices ahead of the upcoming summer holiday season, **by 30 June 2023**.

Next steps

The network of European consumer protection authorities will now close its dialogues with all airline

intermediaries, but authorities will continue to monitor whether commitments are correctly implemented. The network will furthermore continue to monitor compliance by airlines with their commitments under the CPC action against 16 major airlines conducted in 2021.

Background

The [Consumer Protection Cooperation \(CPC\)](#) Network, under the leadership of the Swedish Consumer Agency, launched this action in June 2022. This was in view of the persistently difficult reimbursement conditions for consumers who were affected by early COVID-19 flight cancellations. The action was based also on the information gathered in the context of the dialogues of consumer authorities with airlines held in 2021, as well as complaints from EU consumers submitted to national authorities and bodies.

The Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network is a network of authorities responsible for the enforcement of EU consumer protection laws. To tackle cross-border infringements of consumer law, those national authorities, assisted by the European Commission, coordinate their investigation and enforcement actions. The specific cooperation and coordination mechanism under which the network operates is governed by the [Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation](#).

For More Information

[Consumer protection: Airlines reimburse over 500,000 flight vouchers as result of Commission and consumer authorities action in COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[Coordinated consumer actions: air travel](#)

[Consumer Protection Cooperation Network](#)

[EU Passenger Rights](#)

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Quotes:

Travellers will be better protected this summer. Since the COVID crisis we have acted to increase the resilience of the air travel sector and its capacity to respect their commitments towards consumers. For instance, by ensuring that companies have means to pay back passengers when flights are cancelled by an airline. This action is a new step to ensure that consumers get their right fully respected and get a timely ticket refund – no matter if they booked directly with an airline or via an intermediary. Consumers will also be better informed of their passenger rights and of the possible hurdles that they could face in case of issues in connection with a booking through intermediaries.

Didier Reynders, Commissioner for Justice - 27/06/2023

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