

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001628/24
to the Commission
Ioan-Rareş Bogdan (PPE)
(5 September 2024)**

Subject: Poor treatment of airline passengers

I welcome the Commission's efforts to uphold the rights of EU citizens and to encourage the adoption of rules to ensure they are compensated when those rights are not respected.

However, I would like to draw attention to the fact that some airlines simply fail to understand that they cannot make profits at any price.

Hundreds of thousands of passengers purchase priority boarding, but are not properly provided with that service, despite their paying an additional sum.

It is unacceptable for people, some with young children or babies, to be crammed into corridors and narrow stairways and to have to wait standing up, for long periods of time, before starting to board.

I would like to know whether such situations are the fault of the airline companies or those responsible for airport services.

Whatever the case, when a service has been paid for it has to be provided, and if that service is not provided then people need to be reimbursed.

What steps will the Commission take to protect European citizens in such situations and to uphold their right to receive a service for which they have paid?

Submitted: 5.9.2024

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(24 October 2024)**

The Commission would like to underline that, in accordance with the Air Services Regulation 1008/2008 ⁽¹⁾, airlines are free to set their own airfares.

However, air carriers must also provide information to passengers on the elements of those fares, particularly as regards optional price supplements such as 'priority boarding' services.

As regards the boarding process, it is up to air carriers and airports to design and implement it. It should be however emphasised that accordingly to EU rules on consumer protection and a common principle of consumer contract law, the customer can request a refund if a service has been paid for but is not provided.

Furthermore, if an airline expects that the flight will be delayed beyond the scheduled departure time, passengers are entitled to assistance depending on the length of the delay and distance of the flight.

Finally, while the Commission has no power to intervene in individual disputes between passengers and air carriers, passengers who believe their rights under the regulation have not been respected can contact the body in the country where the incident took place ⁽²⁾ or contact a European Consumer centre when it comes to general consumer rights ⁽³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32008R1008>

⁽²⁾ List of National Enforcement Bodies : https://transport.ec.europa.eu/document/download/d7b5dd33-4083-4faa-8132-b6dc8b3a1c07_en?filename=2004_261_national_enforcement_bodies.pdf

⁽³⁾ List of European Consumer Centres Network : https://commission.europa.eu/live-work-travel-eu/consumer-rights-and-complaints/resolve-your-consumer-complaint/european-consumer-centres-network-ecc-net_en