

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002292/24
to the Commission
Kosma Złotowski (ECR)
(29 October 2024)

Subject: Air passenger rights: carry-on luggage, separation of families, fares for infants

In 2023, Parliament called for the standardisation of airlines' carry-on baggage rules. Parliament's resolution reflects citizens' concerns about the inconvenience and discomfort caused by inconsistent rules on airline carry-on luggage and the resulting hidden costs. These costs make it difficult to compare real prices or to use the services of different airlines.

Other examples of hidden costs that should be addressed by the EU are seat assignment fees for families and additional costs for children, especially fares for infants. Low-cost airlines separate families on board. One child is seated next to one parent, while the other is placed in a different part of the plane, putting pressure on the customer to pay extra so that the whole family can be seated together. Infants are charged even though they do not occupy a separate seat on the plane and have to travel on their guardian's lap.

1. Does the Commission intend to address the three following issues: inconsistent rules on carry-on luggage, the separation of families on board and fares for infants?
2. Does the Commission plan to revise the Air Services Regulation (1008/2008) ⁽¹⁾, the Package Travel Directive (2015/2302) ⁽²⁾ or any other legally binding act, or to propose new legislation, to address the issues mentioned?

Submitted: 29.10.2024

Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(20 December 2024)

The Commission acknowledges the potential inconvenience and confusion for passengers which result from the many different hand luggage policies in place at different airlines and for different classes of tickets, while noting that airlines' practice of unbundling products allows them to offer lower basic fares to consumers.

The Air Services Regulation ⁽¹⁾ provides for pricing freedom of air carriers, and also requires that the final price (including unavoidable and foreseeable taxes, fees and charges) must at all times be indicated.

Safety rules require minors to sit either next to or within one row from an adult with whom they are travelling, and compliance with safety rules should not be subject to additional charges.

The Commission notes that the charge for infants seated on an adult's lap is typically much lower than a full adult fare and includes the carriage of equipment such as pushchairs and infant car seats in the hold of the aircraft.

The Commission has called upon the airline industry to engage fully with other relevant stakeholders to establish common industry standards on the weight and dimensions of hand luggage, for example in the letter ⁽²⁾ from the Commissioner for Transport dated 6 December 2023. The Commission services continue to work with all stakeholders, including passenger representatives, towards a sector-wide solution.

A review of the Air Services Regulation was announced in the 2020 Commission Work Programme and will be put forward in the current mandate. It could include *inter alia* possible measures to improve price transparency, providing greater clarity on what constitute 'unavoidable and foreseeable' price elements.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community, OJ L 293, 31.10.2008, p. 3, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2008/1008/oj>.

² Directive (EU) 2015/2302 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 on package travel and linked travel arrangements, amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 326, 11.12.2015, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2015/2302/oj>.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EC) 1008/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community (Recast). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32008R1008>

⁽²⁾ https://transport.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-12/Open_letter_Commissioner_Valean_hand_luggage_2023-06-12_0.pdf