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Press release | 13.03.2013

Air passenger rights

Softening EU rules on not an option

The European Commission today presented a communication outlining plans to review EU rules on air passenger rights. Commenting on the plans, Green transport spokesperson **Keith Taylor** (MEP, UK), who was draftsman for the European Parliament on air passenger rights, said:

"There is a clear need to clarify EU rules on air passenger rights, notably to ensure the rights of consumers are not compromised. However, using this review to soften EU rules on air passenger rights is clearly a totally wrongheaded approach.

"Proposals to extend the acceptable time for delays, beyond which passengers are eligible for compensation, will not fly (1). Instead of kowtowing to the bullyboy tactics of low-cost carriers, the Commission should be seeking greater clarity and enforcement of the existing rules governing air passenger rights.

"EU rules need to be strengthened to include provisions for better enforcement, as well as for more detailed and transparent information on rights for all passengers, notably for disabled people and persons with reduced mobility (including in formats for disabled people). However, the proposals presented by the Commission today would still fall short of providing the necessary clarity. The Greens believe there is the need to create independent bodies for mediation that can act in the case of conflict between operators and passengers for all transport modes.

"The Commission has committed to come forward with proposals for people with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. These must include provisions for strict rules on assistance and barrier-free access.

"Airlines already receive massive direct and indirect subsidies (such as through exemptions from energy taxation and VAT) each year. Financial constraints can be no excuse for failing to guarantee passenger rights."

(1) Compensation in case of delay would only be granted after 5 hours (for connecting flights) and after 12 hours for long-distance flights.

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Keith Taylor

Member

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