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Marzà Condemns EU Council's “Backdoor Deal” to Weaken Passenger Rights

EFA MEP Vicent Marzà has strongly condemned the European Council’s proposed reforms to the EU Air Passenger Rights Regulation, warning that they would legalise abusive practices and undermine EU consumer protections and the authority of the European Parliament.

Marzà criticised the Council’s move to water down rules on airline responsibilities, particularly regarding ongoing illegal charges for carry-on luggage. In 2014, the European Court of Justice ruled that cabin baggage is an essential part of air travel and cannot be subject to extra fees. Yet, many low-cost airlines continue to impose such charges, generating over €10 billion in 2024 alone, in defiance of that ruling.

“These practices are not just abusive, they are illegal,” said Marzà. “Instead of cracking down, the Council wants to write them into law.”

The draft reform also proposes cutting compensation entitlements for delayed or cancelled flights, and, even more concerningly, is being pushed through under an emergency legislative procedure, limiting parliamentary scrutiny and setting a dangerous precedent.

“This is an unprecedented backdoor move that risks undermining the very role of the European Parliament as co-legislator,” Marzà warned. “Rushing through such major changes without proper debate or accountability is not only undemocratic, it’s an insult to EU citizens. The Council must remember: we are co-legislators, not spectators.”

EFA MEPs are demanding full parliamentary involvement in the reform process, robust enforcement of existing rulings, and legislative changes that strengthen, not weaken, passenger rights.

Vicent Marzà, EFA MEP, said:

“This Parliament was elected by the people, not by the board of directors at Ryanair.”

“We are not here to protect corporate profits. We are here to protect citizens from abuse. If we allow this proposal to pass, we send a dangerous message, that the rule of law only applies when it’s convenient.”

“We are here to defend and strengthen citizens’ rights in the face of powerful interests who believe they are above the law.”

“We must defend the dignity of this Parliament by rejecting the Council’s proposal and ensuring that EU law is not only respected, but properly enforced.”

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Vicent Marzà

Member

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