

Commission proposes a new framework to regulate aviation security charges

Today the Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive on aviation security charges in Europe. The proposal follows a recent report on the financing of aviation security. The aims are to ensure transparency, non-discrimination and consultation of airlines when fixing the level of charges, as well as the cost-relatedness of security charges. It also proposes to establish an independent supervisory authority in each Member State.

Against the background of a challenging overall economic situation, Antonio Tajani, European Commission Vice-president in charge of Transport, said: "*Significant steps have been taken to ensure the protection of the public travelling by air. This has increased security costs for passengers. We need to take steps to ensure the most cost-effective provision of security services.*"

At present, recovery of aviation security costs is regulated at national level. However, information to passengers on these costs can be inadequate and airlines are not systematically consulted at all EU airports. This situation hinders the existence of a true playing field for airports and air carriers alike, which is particularly critical in a very challenging environment for the entire aviation sector.

A recent Commission report concludes that non-discriminatory and strictly cost-related security charges are essential to ensure fair and undistorted competition between airlines and between airports¹. This is why the European Commission proposes the following common principles for the levying of security charges at Community airports:

1. **Non-discrimination**: Security charges shall not discriminate between passengers or between airlines.
2. **Consultation**: Airlines should be consulted on the security charges in a compulsory and regular manner, at least once a year. Airports should take airlines' views into account before a decision is taken, and, in case no agreement is reached, should justify their decisions.
3. **Transparency**: Transparency needs to be ensured at three distinct levels:
 - At airports' level: Airlines should receive information from airports on the components serving as a basis for determining the level of security charges (for example, services and infrastructure provided in return for the charges, method of calculation or foreseen investment).
 - At airlines' level: To allow airports to properly assess the requirements regarding future investment and better adapt their security infrastructure, airlines should share, for example, their traffic forecasts on a timely basis.

¹ Report from the Commission on financing aviation security, COM(2009) 30 final, 2.2.2009

- At Member States' level: It is important to establish transparency in relation to the economic impact of national security measures that are more stringent than EU requirements.
4. **Cost-relatedness**: Security charges shall be used *exclusively* to meet security costs, and should take into account the grants and subsidies allocated by the authorities for security purposes, the cost of financing facilities and the costs of installations and security operations.
 5. **Independent supervisory authority** and resolution of disagreements: Independent authorities should be established in each Member State to ensure the correct application of the measures, together with a procedure for resolving disagreements between airports and users.