
Transport: EU updates aviation security rules to simplify and improve procedures

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New measures to streamline and simplify the EU framework for aviation security, first put in place in 2002 after the September 11 attacks, came into force today. The revision is about better regulation – simplifying and improving procedures to make it easier for industry on a daily basis to implement safety controls, without any reduction in security. For passengers, the package opens the door for the EU to negotiate "one-stop shop" security agreements with third countries – allowing for the possibility to reduce re-screening for transfer passengers. Most importantly, it sets a clear deadline for the lifting of the current restrictions on the carriage of liquids in cabin baggage – new screening equipment for liquids must be used in all airports across Europe by April 2013. Overall, the package aims to improve the passenger experience, shorten transfer times at airports and reduce costs.

Siim Kallas, Commission Vice-President in charge of transport, said: "A lot has been learnt since the first EU-wide rules putting in place common aviation security standards were put in place after September 11. This is about building on the experience of recent years and streamlining procedures, so that on a daily basis security controls are easier for industry to implement. For passengers, the aim is also to simplify wherever possible the necessary security controls. In that sense this package takes a significant step forwards in signalling the beginning of the end for the current restrictions on liquids in cabin baggage, with a clear and final deadline of April 2013".

The EU rules

After the September 11 terrorist attacks, the EU adopted its first common rules on aviation security in 2002, with detailed provisions on access to sensitive areas or airports, aircraft security, passenger screening and baggage handling, control of cargo and mail, staff screening and training, and items prohibited on board planes or in airports. Before 2002, each Member State had its own rules for aviation security.

Regulation 300/2008 on aviation security and its implementing measures is fully applicable as of 29 April 2010. The new rules put in place a series of measures to improve, streamline and simplify existing procedures. For example by:

- Eliminating **duplication of security controls**. For example, reducing costly duplication of checks in strictly controlled areas of EU airports, where there has already been strict screening for access. This is of significant operational benefit for airlines and airports.

- **Simplifying procedures.** For example, by establishing a **single set of standards** for the documents you need to get access at airports. The new rules clarify which kinds of identification and authorisations are necessary for access to different restricted areas. This clarifies the situation for authorities making it easier for them to operate the system.
- **Harmonising procedures.** For example, introducing EU-wide procedures for the recognition of hauliers transporting air cargo consignments. These can be recognised and used by hauliers in all Member States – this reduces restrictions for hauliers and the need for costly re-screening of cargo.
- **Introducing common minimum standards** as regards security training for all staff that implement security controls.

On one-stop security

The new EU framework allows for the recognition of equivalence of security measures of third countries, which can open the door to the establishment of one-stop security arrangements between the EU and non-EU countries. One benefit of such a one-stop security system is that passengers arriving at EU airports and transferring to other destinations would no longer need to be re-screened, thus allowing for faster connection times, lower costs and greater convenience for travellers.

On liquid restrictions

By 29 April 2013 at the latest, all liquids will be allowed in cabin baggage and will be screened. By that date, the current restrictions on the carriage of liquids in cabin baggage will end. The transition period until 2013 is necessary to allow for a roll-out of liquids screening equipment at all EU airports.

As a preliminary step in phasing out the restrictions on liquids, as from 29 April 2011 at the latest, duty-free liquids purchased at third country airports or on board third country airlines and carried in tamper evident bags will be allowed as cabin baggage and will be screened. Today, these liquids are only allowed in cabin baggage if they come from selected third countries (United States, Canada, Singapore and Croatia).

Next steps

The implementation of these security measures at EU airports will continue to be closely monitored through unannounced Commission inspections. Where necessary, the Commission will perform follow-up inspections or start infringement procedures against Member States in order to ensure the overall level of aviation security in the EU.

For further information, including the legislative package, please consult the Commission's website at: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air/security/security_en.htm