



Airline Coordination Platform



Joint Appeal from Civil Aviation social partners on “unruly passengers” to EU Member States

Reference is made to the ICAO Convention on offences and certain other acts committed on board aircraft (Montréal Protocol of 2014) – also referred to as protocol on “unruly passengers”. The European Social Partners of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee of Civil Aviation launch a joint appeal to EU Member States.

According to EASA (European Aviation Safety Agency), last year “every three hours, the safety of a flight within the EU was threatened by passengers behaving in an unruly or disruptive manner. At least 70% of these incidents involved some form of aggression (and very often against women). Once a month a flight was forced to perform an emergency landing when such situations escalate. The number of reported incidents in 2018 increased by 34% compared to 2017.”

Regrettably, incidents of unruly passenger behaviour on board aircraft continue to rise and the situation has been further exacerbated by new Covid-19 related measures, most notably the requirement to wear facemasks on board an aircraft. While the individuals involved represent a minority of passengers carried, their actions could have significant consequences for the safety, security and comfort of all other passengers and crew on board.

The European Social Partners in the Civil Aviation Sector condemn this kind of behaviour by passengers.

Until 2014, the aviation industry was lacking a deterring instrument to enable prosecution and legal action against passengers disrupting a flight through their behaviour. An unruly passenger could basically only be prosecuted in the country of registration of the aircraft in question, which in practice means that a majority of offenders could walk away without any consequences or charges.

The Montréal Protocol (MP14) however, has filled this jurisdictional gap, by making it possible to deliver a passenger to authorities in the state of landing or possible diversion, for prosecution. In addition, civil and administrative penalties provide for a wider range of enforcement measures to be available. This is expected to have a powerful deterrent effect.

To this date, 22 States have ratified MP14. It therefore entered into force on 01 January 2020. After the entry into force, the MP14 is now open for ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. However, Malta and Portugal are currently the only EU Member States having ratified the Convention. To ensure uniformity and certainty, widespread ratification is urgently needed.

Given the importance of this matter for aviation safety, security, airlines, crew and passengers, the European Social Partners call on Member States to urgently take their responsibility and all the necessary steps to ratify the Convention without delay to better protect European crews and their passengers by ensuring effective and coherent handling of unruly passengers..

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This statement is issued jointly by Members of the European Civil Aviation Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee:

European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)
European Cockpit Association (ECA)
Airlines for Dialogue (A4D)
Airline Coordination Platform (ACP)
European Regions Airline Association (ERA)
Airlines International Representation in Europe (AIRE)
Airports Council International – Europe (ACI)
Airline Services Association (ASA)