

Ministers of Transport of the European Union
By email only

Brussels, 11 March 2026

Subject: European industry calls on Member States to maintain a balanced approach on the Air Passenger Rights revision to protect Europe's connectivity and European businesses without further diluting the core objectives of the Commission's proposal

Dear Transport Minister,

Ahead of the COREPER meeting on 13 March 2026, we write to you on behalf of the European Regions Airline Association (ERA), Airlines for Europe (A4E), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Eurochambres, and Airport Regions Council (ARC) to call on Member States to maintain a balanced approach as part of the negotiations on the revision of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 on Air Passenger Rights (EU261 thereafter) protecting Europe's connectivity and European businesses and not to weaken their mandate to compromise toward the counterproductive European Parliament's position.

We understand that Member States are currently being consulted on a new Council mandate ahead of the trilogue scheduled for 23 March.

The initial objective of the revision of the passenger rights framework—striking a balance between the interests of passengers and the aviation industry—risks being significantly weakened should the Council consider compromising toward the European Parliament's position on key objectives of the Commission's proposal.

None of the potential changes has undergone a proper impact assessment regarding their consequences for Europe's connectivity, passenger costs, and the knock-on effects on European businesses and communities, particularly in less connected and remote territories dependent on air transport.

Airlines' initial estimates point to a significant increase in EU261 costs for most airlines, on top of the already foreseen €8.1 billion per year, potentially doubling to €15 billion annually should the European Parliament's proposal be implemented. Together with the additional cost of labour, energy, decarbonisation and overall regulatory burdens, which are already expected to double over the next five years¹, this will lead airlines to reduce routes viability and offer fewer choices, or oblige airlines to recover increased costs through higher fares.

Existing estimates suggest that a moderate 1% rise in ticket costs leads to 1.1% drop in passenger demand². As fewer people will be able to fly, this would significantly affect the viability of the 32,662 routes³ currently operated under the EU261 framework. Projections based on the European Parliament's stance indicate that more substantial ticket price increases could further exacerbate route rationalization. This would disproportionately affect non-hub airports, leading to adverse socio-economic consequences for the regions they serve.

The entire aviation ecosystem contributes 4.6% to European GDP, and in 2023 air transport supported 15 million jobs in Europe⁴. At the same time, regional air transport alone supports over 335,000 jobs and

² DLR study on aviation location costs, March 2025

³ Eurocontrol data

⁴ ATAG, [2024 Aviation Benefits Report](#), December 2024

generates more than €23 billion in GVA across Europe, contributing to regional development.⁵ Any compromise toward the European Parliament's position would disproportionately affect the entire aviation value chain, including airports, regional economies, tourism, the broader European business landscape and the jobs associated with these sectors.

We therefore urge Member States not to further water down the Council's agreement reached in June and to prioritise a balanced and evidence-based approach which – as pointed out by the Cyprus Presidency – preserves connectivity, a level playing field and Europe's competitiveness. We remain firmly committed to working together with Member States to deliver such an outcome.

Sincerely,



⁵ Oxera for ERA, [The economic, social and environmental value of regional airlines in Europe](#), February 2025