

Brussels, 6 July 2005

## European Commission defends air passenger rights

***The European Commission has just launched infringement proceedings against Austria, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta and Sweden for failure to meet all their obligations under the Regulation which entered into force on 17 February 2005 and affords air passengers greater protection in the event of denied boarding, flight cancellation or long delays. The Commission is thereby showing its determination to guarantee fair treatment for passengers in all the Member States and commitment to promoting the benefits of EU membership. "I am determined to ensure that the new passenger rights are respected" said Vice-President Jacques Barrot, responsible for transport. "All the Member States must have effective penalties which can be applied to airlines which do not meet their obligations."***

Austria, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta and Sweden have not yet taken the steps required to establish penalties to be imposed on airlines for infringement. These penalties must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive so that the new rights really do guarantee passengers greater protection.

Luxembourg is also the only country which has not yet set up a body to ensure that the Regulation<sup>1</sup> is properly applied, even though it was adopted 16 months ago ([IP/05/181](#)).

At a meeting on 19 May 2005 ([IP/05/574](#)), the Commission had already reminded the Member States of their obligations under the Regulation and to the public. Today it regrets that the Member States concerned have still not taken the action required.

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<sup>1</sup> [Regulation \(EC\) No 261/2004](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers in the event of denied boarding and of cancellation or long delay of flights, and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 295/91.