

# CRUISE INDUSTRY: PASSENGERS' RIGHTS STRENGTHENED



The European Parliament set stricter rules on ship operators regarding the relation to their passengers. The Parliament set the rules for compensation of delays and accepting the disabled passengers on board a ship. The regulations will be enforced in 2012.

In June 2010, **the European Parliament passed a regulation for assistance and compensation for delays and cancellations for passengers of ships or ferries.** The text, which comes into force in 2012, reinforces the rights of passengers. In comparison, in the context of EU legislation, air passengers are entitled only to compensation for cancellations (and not for flight delays).

The new provisions, however, do not apply for cases of delays caused by extreme weather. If such event occurs, snacks or meals should be served to passengers, to the extent possible. **No matter whether they choose to undertake the trip or not, passengers will be entitled to compensation equivalent to 25% of the ticket price.** If the delay is more than twice the minimum period, passengers will be entitled to compensation equivalent to 50% of the ticket price. Moreover, if, after a delay, passengers are forced to wait overnight before completing their journey, the operator will pay them up to 80 Euros for their stay (3 nights maximum).

The regulations also specify that **disabled passengers can not be denied to board a ship only because of their handicap.** According to Tourmag.com, free assistance must be provided to disabled people in ports, provided that the carrier or operator has been informed at the time of booking or at least 48 hours prior to boarding.

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