

Joint Declaration on Unruly Passengers

Ensuring safe and efficient aviation, both on the ground and on board, is the common goal of the Austrian authorities, airports, airlines, (ground) handling services and the entire aviation industry.

Passengers who disobey instructions and whose behaviour jeopardises safety, order and the smooth flow of air traffic have become a serious challenge in recent years. Such inappropriate behaviour by a minority of passengers not only affects the travel experience of other passengers, but can also lead to significant disruption and costs, particularly for airlines and airports. In addition, such inappropriate behaviour by individuals puts staff and other passengers at risk. In addition to the operational irregularities and costs caused by such behaviour, the protection of staff and passengers is of paramount importance. Threats, insults and physical attacks against aviation staff are unacceptable and require decisive action. The safety of air traffic has top priority.

The signatories to this Joint Declaration recognise that decisive and concerted actions are necessary to counteract these developments, to ensure the safety of all parties involved and to promote respectful coexistence.

Therefore, the signatories reaffirm that inappropriate passenger behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances and jointly commit to the following principles:

1. Clear standards of behaviour: Proactive communication with passengers will be established to emphasise the importance of appropriate behaviour and to inform passengers at an early stage of the serious consequences of inappropriate behaviour, including legal and financial consequences.
2. Support for staff: Flight and ground staff will be strengthened and trained in their responsibilities, in order to recognise disruptive behaviour at an early stage, de-escalate it professionally and, if necessary, take firm and appropriate actions. The personnel will receive support from their organisations and their responsible authorities.
3. Escalation measures and prosecution: Passengers who disobey orders or behave improperly must expect consequences under criminal, administrative penal and civil law (e.g. fines, imprisonment and claims for reimbursement of costs). In this context, the competent authorities evaluate the effectiveness of existing legal regulations and update them if necessary.
4. Measures against alcohol abuse: The excessive consumption of alcohol and other mind-altering substances before and during the flight will be addressed as a key factor for inappropriate behaviour.
5. Collaborative working group: A permanent working group consisting of representatives of all signatories will be set up under the leadership of the Federal Ministry for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure (BMIMI). This working group reviews the measures and their progress at regular intervals, evaluates new developments and draws up recommendations for increased prevention and intervention.
6. Evaluation and transparency: The development of the number and severity of incidents will be evaluated by a working group at regular intervals, at least once a year, and the results and corresponding adjustments to the measures are agreed in the aforementioned working group.

Commitments of the signatories

The signatories jointly declare:

- Awareness-raising campaigns: Awareness-raising campaigns in which it is clearly explained what behaviour is tolerated or which behaviour is not tolerated by passengers will be further strengthened;
- Clarify serious consequences: Passengers, should they disregard instructions from ground staff or flight crew, will be made aware of the serious consequences and their personal liability at an early stage;
- Consistent action: It will be ensured that the responsible authorities act consistently with regard to the identification, de-escalation and intervention of conspicuous passengers;
- Accessibility of information: If passengers request further information regarding the applicable regulations, appropriate information on the applicable regulations and contact details of the competent authorities will be provided;
- Comprehensive training: To ensure the professional handling of improper behaviour, specific training programmes for staff will be further developed and implemented on a regular basis;
- Preventive measures: To ensure that passengers who attract attention through improper behaviour can be prevented from boarding, check-in processes will be regularly evaluated and adapted if necessary.

Concluding remarks

In order to prevent improper behaviour in the future, to ensure the safety of all passengers and to guarantee the protection of personnel, the signatories to this Joint Declaration promote close cooperation between all parties involved. In addition to the extensive measures taken by the air transport industry, the legal framework and consistent action by the responsible authorities also play a key role in putting a stop to improper behaviour in air transport. A safe and respectful air traffic can only be guaranteed through joint efforts.

Signatories

