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Package travel: more transparency for consumers



Booking package travel online will become more transparent and consumers will enjoy better rights. The European Parliament today voted for an updated and improved EU directive. "There has been a lot of innovation in the online world. The current Directive dates back to 1990 and it is vital that we ensure adequate consumer rights and market opportunities for service providers," said European Parliament Rapporteur Hans-Peter Mayer.

The Directive concerns all holidaymakers who book a pre-arranged package involving combinations of flights, hotels or car rentals, for example. "The most important thing is that consumers receive all necessary information before signing the contract, making sure that a party is liable for the performance of all services in the package," said Hans-Peter Mayer.

MEPs want to improve the Commission proposal in a number of areas. In the case of unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances consumers will be offered accommodation for a maximum stay of five nights and a maximum of 125 Euro per night. "The organiser ought to have the right to arrange the accommodation first. They have to take into account the originally booked category," said Mayer.

MEPs do not want to accept automatic price surcharges. "If the organiser of a package travel deal intends to increase the price after the booking due to increased fuel costs by the flight operator, for example, the consumer ought to be able to cancel the booking without any sanctions and be reimbursed the amount of the original booking if the price increase goes beyond eight percent. Travellers also ought to have the right to receive a comparable alternative offer," the EPP Group MEP said.

Today's vote marks the first reading in Parliament. After the European Elections, the new Parliament can enter into negotiations with the Council on the final wording of the Directive, said Hans-Peter Mayer. "If the Member States can get their act together and are ready for negotiations, the new standards could apply by late 2017," he concluded.

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