

# Statement of EU civil aviation social partners on unruly passenger behaviour

**Brussels, 16 September 2022**

The issue of unruly or disruptive passengers has existed for decades, but since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and the requirements to comply with COVID-19 safety measures, we have seen a sharp increase in the quantity and severity of disruptive passenger incidents in airports and in the aircraft. These incidents have a negative effect on passengers, employers, and workers and must be addressed with urgency.

This phenomenon is not going to stop and dramatically escalated with the increased level of COVID-related measures and restrictions and the severe lack of staff in the aviation sector, which increase passengers' irritability and aggressivity. From an operational perspective, such incidents cause longer queues and missed flights, as well as significant delays and additional costs to airlines and ground handlers. Furthermore, the increased level of stress and complexity due to restrictions and lack of staff has led to an escalation of verbal and physical violence, and attacks on aviation workers with direct passenger contact on the ground and in-flight, and in particular, the disproportionate impact on women workers, who make up most of the frontline workers.

There are many causes for passengers to become violent, including intoxication, COVID-19-related restrictions, document requirements, passenger expectations, and unexpected rules leading to levies for passengers.

As social partners, we aim to pursue a safe working environment for our members and strive to find a solution to the increasing challenge in the sector. Together we commit to creating a safe environment for both workers and passengers in the airport and the aircraft by:

- Reminding all passengers that they are responsible for their own behaviour and they need to be “fit to fly”;
- Cooperating with national authorities and regulators on these matters;
- Cooperating with local police and security services to address incidents quickly;
- Providing information to passengers reminding them of the consequences and illegality of verbal and physical abuse on aviation workers;

- Making sure that financial consequences are severe enough to prevent unruly behaviour;
- In the most severe cases, stopping repeat offenders from engaging in abusive behaviour through banning them from airports or airlines;
- Providing training to staff in order to deescalate disruptive passengers, recovering service, and managing aggressive behaviour;
- Ensuring staff have the support to deal with mental and physical health issues stemming from disruptive passenger incidents.

As an industry, we will not stand for abusive behaviour against aviation workers, and today we commit to addressing this issue collectively with all aviation stakeholders.