Regulation on ship passengers' rights adopted

Ship passengers will benefit from enhanced rights to compensation and assistance when their journey is cancelled or delayed. Passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility will be protected against discrimination when booking a journey and will receive appropriate assistance at embarkation and disembarkation as well as on board. Those are the main elements of the new regulation adopted today by the Council (32/10 +14223/10 ADD 1 REV 1).

In the event of cancellation or delays, passengers have to be informed no later than 30 minutes after the scheduled time of departure. They have a right to assistance and to re-routing or reimbursement when departure is delayed for more than 90 minutes; in this case, the carrier has to provide snacks, meals or refreshments and, where necessary, accommodation up to a cost of 80 euros per night for a maximum of three nights. Depending on the scheduled duration of the journey, compensation amounting to a quarter or half of the ticket price may also be due in the event of delayed arrival. However, the right to accommodation does not apply if the delay or cancellation is caused by bad weather; likewise, no compensation for late arrival will be paid if weather conditions or extraordinary circumstances hindered the performance of the service.

Passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility will be given assistance providing they inform the carrier at the latest 48 hours in advance about the assistance needed. If the disabled passenger needs to be accompanied, the accompanying person will be carried free of charge. Loss of or damage to mobility equipment caused by the carrier or by a shipping incident will be compensated.
The regulation applies to ships carrying more than 12 passengers and with a crew of more than three persons. Passenger services over a very short distance (less than 500 metres one way) are excluded from the scope of the regulation, as are historical ships and excursion and sightseeing tours other than cruises. In addition, seagoing ships of less than 300 gross tons in domestic transport may be exempted for a transitional period, if passengers' rights are adequately ensured under national law.

The regulation will start to be applied two years after its publication in the EU's Official Journal.