

# 218,000 flight disruptions in Europe last year may lead to over 6 billion euros in compensation

*Only about a third of affected passengers contact airlines or compensation management companies.*

VILNIUS, LITHUANIA, January 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- According to data from compensation management company [Skycop.com](https://www.skycop.com), nearly 218,000 departing flights in the EU, EEA and the UK were delayed by more than three hours or canceled, accounting for 1.5 percent of all departures. While this marks a slight improvement compared to 2023, the delays and cancellations translate to over 6 billion euros in potential compensation for affected passengers, with two-thirds of this amount usually remaining unclaimed.



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*Nerijus Zaleckas*

In 2024, nearly 218,000 departing European flights were eligible for compensation under the EU261 scheme. Although some of these disruptions were caused by

factors outside airlines' control such as severe weather or strikes, the figures still point to a total of 6.5 billion euros in compensation. This estimate is based on conservative assumptions of 120 passengers per flight and a minimum payout of 250 euros.

Last year, the worst-performing aviation markets were Luxembourg (2.8% of disrupted departures), the Netherlands (2.7%), Iceland (2.6%), and Germany (2.2%). Among the major aviation markets, in addition to Germany, the UK (1.8%) and France (1.7%) also exceeded the European average of 1.5% in 2024.

The lowest proportion of disrupted flights last year was recorded at airports in Latvia (0.5%), Lithuania (0.6%), Greece (0.8%), as well as in Estonia, Slovakia, and Slovenia (all 0.9%), and Sweden, Malta, and Spain (each 1%).

European airlines and airports have somewhat improved performance from 2023 when 1.8% of departing flights were significantly delayed or cancelled. The most significant progress over the year occurred at airports in the Netherlands and Iceland, although these countries remain among the most problematic aviation markets for passengers. The biggest decline in

performance was seen in Finland, which was the leader on the continent in 2023 with just 0.6% of disrupted flights. Last year, however, this Nordic country had 1.3% of significantly disrupted departures.

According to Skycop attorney Nerijus Zaleckas, the slightly improved figures across Europe last year could be attributed to the somewhat easing tensions in aircraft and parts supply chains or simply airlines and airports getting accustomed to growing passenger flows. On the other hand, even with 1.5 percent of significantly disrupted flights, this still represents billions of euros in compensation for passengers, many of whom fail to take advantage of this opportunity.

"Our experience shows that only about a third of affected passengers contact airlines or compensation management companies. The so-called EU261 mechanism was created to compensate for inconveniences while also encouraging airlines to improve performance. Therefore, I continue to urge affected passengers to exercise their rights: it's not just extra money for disrupted travel plans, but also a prompt for airlines to further enhance their processes," says Zaleckas.

According to Skycop's calculations, passengers across Europe could theoretically claim 6.5 billion euros in compensation last year, with over 4 billion euros remaining with airlines if passengers continue to be slow in asserting their rights.

Under EU261 regulation, passengers are entitled to compensation for significant delays when departing from EU airports (regardless of airline origin) and when arriving at EU airports with EU-registered airlines. If a departing flight arrives at its final destination more than three hours late, passengers are entitled to compensation ranging from €250 to €600, depending on the flight distance. Passengers may also claim compensation for canceled flights, unexpected transport or accommodation costs, lost baggage, and other scenarios.

Passengers who have faced long delays, cancellations, or other disruptions can request compensation directly from airlines via their websites or by contacting compensation management companies like Skycop. These companies typically have years of experience, a wide network of legal partners, and advanced IT systems to quickly determine eligibility and secure payouts. Most compensation management companies operate on a "success fee" basis, charging a commission only if the compensation is successfully obtained for the passenger.

For this data, Skycop analyzed 31 countries: all EU member states, as well as Norway, Switzerland, and Iceland, which are part of the EU261 regulation. The United Kingdom was also included, as its UK261 scheme essentially mirrors the European regulation. The statistics only considered flights that are eligible for compensation for passengers—those delayed for more than 3 hours or canceled.

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