

## INFORMATION ON THE PACKAGE TRAVEL DIRECTIVE IN CONNECTION WITH THE COVID-19

If you have booked a **package tour** (i.e. a combination of at least two travel services, e.g. transport and accommodation) **and you have not yet left for your trip**, consult the travel advice of your national authorities and contact your tour operator or travel agency.

Travel advice is a national competence. Check if your national authority, e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, issued an official travel warning for the region to which you plan to travel. Travel advice is being updated as the situation changes. The list of EU Member States' travel advice is available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/travel-advice-list.pdf>

According to the [Directive on Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements](#), both the traveller and the tour operator can cancel the trip without penalty in case of “*unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances occurring at the place of destination or its immediate vicinity and significantly affecting the performance of the package, or which significantly affect the carriage of passengers to the destination*” (Article 12(2) of the Package Travel Directive).

‘*Unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances*’ means a situation beyond the control of the party who invokes such a situation and the consequences of which could not have been avoided even if all reasonable measures had been taken. Significant risks to human health, such as the outbreak of a serious disease like the COVID-19 at the travel destination or its immediate vicinity usually qualify as such unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances.

The assessment whether those circumstances significantly affect the performance of the package must be made on a case-by-case basis.

An official travel warning of national authorities is an important indicator that the package travel contract can be cancelled due to unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances impacting the performance of the trip.

*Example:* If you have booked a package tour to a city or region to which access is restricted or where public life is subject to significant limitations (e.g. closure of tourist attractions or museums), this should give you the right to cancel your trip.

*Example:* If you or an accompanying family member have a medical condition for which exposure to the COVID-19 is particularly dangerous, you should have the right to cancel your package travel contract if the risk of contamination with COVID-19 at the travel destination or its immediate vicinity is declared high by the competent authorities.

Hence, it would have to be assessed whether travellers can reasonably be expected to travel to the destination(s) in light of the risk to their health and life. A subjective feeling of fear would not be sufficient.

**In those cases, either the organiser or the traveller can cancel the package travel contract. The traveller has the right to get a full refund of any payments made for the package, within 14 days.**

Before cancelling, we suggest that you contact your tour operator or travel agency which may propose alternative solutions, such as postponement of the trip or change of destination.

If you have booked a **package tour and you are blocked abroad**, your tour operator must provide assistance.

Tour operators have to provide assistance to travellers in difficulty, including by providing information on health services and consular assistance, and by assisting to make distance communications and helping to find alternative travel arrangements.

In case the traveller cannot return home as scheduled (e.g. flight cancelled) due to “unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances”, tour operators must bear the cost of accommodation for maximum three nights, if the carriage of the traveller back home was part of the package. If you are blocked for more than three days, you may be required to bear the extra costs yourself, unless they are born by another entity. Again, please contact your tour operator for further information.

If you want more information about your rights regarding the Package Travel Directive, please consult the [Your Europe website on package travel](#).