

Additional boarding checks

ONLY THE RISK OF DELAY IS CERTAIN

Politics and the aviation industry want to make concerted efforts to ensure more punctuality in aviation, according to the unanimous statement made at the „Aviation Summit“. Essential for this are efficient processes at the airports in particular. At the same time, however, federal states in Germany are considering the idea that airlines should, in the future, compare the boarding passes with travelers' identity documents. This would delay boarding and thus thwart the aim to achieve better punctuality – and all without generating any gain in security. This would also be contrary to the recommendation of the European Commission.

CHECK-IN TIMES WOULD CLEARLY INCREASE

About 320,000 passengers take off from German airports every day. And every identity check takes an average of 5 seconds, according to the German Aviation Association (BDL). And if passengers have already handed in their luggage, but don't have their ID documents for boarding at hand, their suitcase will have to be unloaded again – massive delays will be inevitable.



Sources: BDL, Federal Statistical Office

The aim of the legislative initiative is to record the travel routes and travel plans of potential offenders. In order to do so, airline employees should, firstly, check the ID documents of travelers when boarding and, secondly, compare them with the booking data – an approach that is not very convincing:

- **Airline employees are not policemen:** Airline employees are trained to check tickets and make traveling easier for guests. Conversely, they are not qualified to verify the authenticity of identity documents. That is a task for the police.
- **Flight tickets are not suitable for the purpose:** On boarding cards, names are shortened and numerous characters, such as accents, are displayed differently compared to the ID documents. For passengers with foreign names and papers, this aspect is exacerbated even more. The legislative proposal does not say how this should be handled.
- **No wanted lists are available:** In order to assess whether a passenger is wanted by the police, airline staff would have to be able to access sensitive files, such as wanted lists. For good reasons, however, only the authorities are allowed to access them.

- **“Early on” is not for the airport:** The legislature wants to record the travel plans of suspicious people “early on”. This objective is impossible to achieve when the checks are done immediately before a traveler boards an aircraft.
- **Other modes of transport are excluded:** Similar measures are not being considered with cross-border rail, bus and car transport within the Schengen area – and for good reasons.
- **Further complications:** If passengers do not have their passport at hand, their checked-in luggage will have to be unloaded again. The resulting delays will be enormous.

Danger prevention focuses on safety on board

Aviation safety is about preventing dangerous objects or substances from being brought on board. Checking people's identity contributes nothing to this. The EU has, therefore, deliberately decided against this measure, which is now being proposed in Germany. Accordingly, there is no ID card requirement for travelers in the Schengen Area. Only the police can establish identities beyond doubt. Obliging airline employees to carry out this task does not offer any added value in terms of security – but will lead to millions of delays in boarding.