

## Mask obligation on board

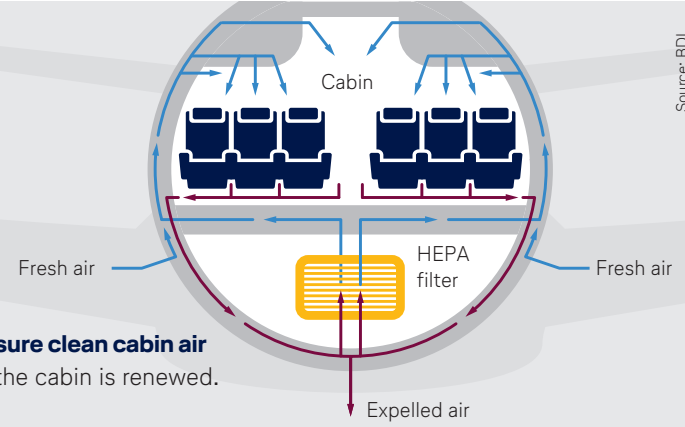
# GERMANY'S UNJUSTIFIABLE SPECIAL PATH

On August 24, the German government presented its draft for the revised Infection Protection Act (IfSG). According to the draft law, the mandatory mask requirement on airplanes is not only to be continued, but tightened. This would cement Germany's special path – without any plausible reason. The Bundestag and Bundesrat must urgently ensure improvements in the further legislative process.

**Clean cabin air**

“The risk of infection is extremely low. This is also related to the air filtration systems in airplanes, which are exorbitantly better than in all other modes of transport. They filter out more than 99 percent of germs.”

**René Gottschalk, Head of the Frankfurt Health Department**



Source: BDL

**High efficiency (HEPA) filters ensure clean cabin air**  
Every 2 to 3 minutes all the air in the cabin is renewed.

Under the federal government's plans, passengers on board aircraft taking off or landing in Germany will still have to wear masks. However, only FFP2 masks are to be permitted in the future. Previously, travelers could also use surgical masks. This means a significant tightening.

### Special regulation not justifiable

Whether in the subway, on the bus, in clubs or concert halls – the German government has decided against a uniform regulation on the wearing of masks. Only in airplanes and on long-distance rail services is a special regulation to apply. There is no scientific justification for this. On the contrary, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) sees no increased risk of infection on board aircraft. The EU air safety and health authorities EASA and ECDC have been waiving mandatory mask requirements since May - and the vast majority of countries are acting accordingly.

### International isolation – a misguided development

Our neighboring countries, Great Britain, the USA: they have all long since dropped the requirement to wear masks on board. The list goes on and on. For German airlines, this results in a massive competitive disadvantage. Passengers who have the choice of flying for several hours with or

without a mask usually opt for the more comfortable option. It is true that the mask requirement formally applies to all airlines flying to or from Germany. However, it is not a secret that airlines from countries where masks are not mandatory hardly apply the regulation at all.

### Travelers' understanding wanes

The German mask requirement has long since lost the acceptance of many passengers and leads to conflicts at the expense of employees. This applies all the more to a German go-it-alone in favor of the FFP2 mask. We must now focus on personal responsibility and voluntary action. In airplanes, the air is cleaned by high-efficiency filters (HEPA). In this respect, it is difficult to understand why stricter rules should apply here than in other areas of life.

Good policy is reasonable and does not neglect the comprehensibility of legal requirements. The IfSG draft fundamentally contradicts these premises: compliance with mandatory masks provokes resistance among air travelers and places a considerable burden on our crews. A mandatory FFP2 mask would further increase the competitive disadvantage for domestic airlines. A revision is urgently needed.