

# Enabling Air Travel with Oxygen in Europe

**An EFA Booklet for Patients  
with Chronic Respiratory Disease**



in collaboration with



## Contents

<b>Foreword by Breda Flood, EFA President .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Foreword by Monica Fletcher, ELF Chair .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	
Objectives for the booklet .....	8
Practical help for people who have to travel with oxygen .....	11
The case against discrimination .....	12
A Word from Keith Taylor, Member of the European Parliament .....	15
<b>Stories from the patients travelling with oxygen in Europe</b>	
Travelling with oxygen in Europe .....	18
The Stories .....	19
<b>Instructions and prices from EU airlines</b>	
Instructions from EU airlines .....	48
Different prices between destinations .....	49
<b>EASA rules and regulations interpreted for patients and cabin crew .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Index of Acronyms.....</b>	<b>58</b>

The Oxygen Project Leader is Antje Henriette Fink-Wagner, EFA Fundraising and Programme Officer.

This booklet was written by David Brennan, EFA Membership and Programme Officer, with contributions from the rest of the EFA office team and the European Lung Foundation.

# AIR TRAVEL WITH OXYGEN IN EUROPE

*An EFA Booklet for Patients  
with Chronic Respiratory Diseases*

## Foreword by Breda Flood, EFA President

The European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA) for years has advocated for the needs of people with allergy, asthma and COPD and continues to seek long-term and meaningful solutions to their everyday issues. Within the past two years one issue of concern which has come to our attention has been that of discrimination against patients with chronic respiratory diseases who have a need for oxygen therapy while travelling by airplane.



It all started in November of 2011, when one of the guest speakers at EFA's 2nd COPD Workshop, Betty Sutton – a COPD patient with the need for continuous oxygen therapy – found the cabin crews on her flights between Brussels and Dublin poorly educated to cope with her needs. Her testimonies of a steward asking her to turn off her personal oxygen concentrator for take-off and landing or to book a separate ticket for the same machine on her return journey are in fact manifestations of commonplace misunderstandings and discriminatory practices for patients requiring oxygen therapy.

The experiences of Mrs. Sutton whilst attending our own event drew our attention to the terrible inconsistencies, poor education of cabin crews and unacceptable inequalities for the passengers who need oxygen support. Individual rules by airlines for transport and the use of oxygen on board of the aircraft causes unnecessary confusion and adds high costs to traveling for many oxygen therapy patients. What most of us would consider as ordinary travel, such as business trips, visits to relatives, friends and especially the seaside, where patients with respiratory diseases often find relief from the air pollution found in industrialised communities, becomes simply unaffordable for them.

Research carried out in collaboration with our partner the European Lung Foundation (ELF) clearly pointed out the airline industry is rife with inconsistencies in charges for the use of oxygen. The situation ultimately is a case of discrimination evidenced by the extortionate fees associated with oxygen supply for oxygen therapy patients. While some airlines supply oxygen to passengers free of charge with prior notice upon booking their travels, others will charge a fee as high as 300 EUR per bottle used on flights *within Europe*.

**As EFA President, it is thus my pleasure to present this booklet as a cornerstone for a movement to call out the on-going discriminatory policies employed by certain airlines and call upon policymakers to improve the situation for patients with chronic respiratory diseases.**

EFA wishes to thank all the patients who submitted stories for their willingness to come forwards with their testimonies. Your bravery in not allowing your chronic respiratory diseases to keep you from living a normal life and travelling is an inspiration to EFA and other patients across Europe who may fear travelling would be too expensive and complicated. Your help permits EFA to continue its pursuit of the organisation's objectives and goals and we are grateful that you have voluntarily lent your support in this project. We also thank our sustainable funding partners AirLiquide International as well as Almirall for supporting the EFA Oxygen Harmonisation Project with grants allowing for the publication of this booklet for the public and policymakers.

## Foreword by Monica Fletcher, Chair of the European Lung Foundation

The European Lung Foundation (ELF) thoroughly supports the movement for patients requiring oxygen to be able to travel without discrimination across Europe: and indeed around the world. Air travel is a normal part of many people's lives: for pleasure and for personal needs and also for business and employment. That is why this is such an important publication and I am delighted to have been asked to contribute to the forward.



ELF was founded by the European Respiratory Society (ERS) in 2000 with the aim of bringing together patients, the public and healthcare professionals to improve lung health across Europe. This is done by providing informing and educating the public and patients about lung health and disease, and also by getting them more involved in their own healthcare and others with their condition. Through the ELF website ([www.europeanlung.org](http://www.europeanlung.org)), people with a lung condition in Europe have the opportunity to ask questions about their lung health, and over the last 10 years the most common question has been about the ability to travel when on oxygen and how to do this.

We have heard from many people with severe COPD, restrictive lung disease, cystic fibrosis or severe asthma, who still wish to live active lives and travel, who find it frustrating and difficult to arrange oxygen to enable them to travel safely.

Because of this, the ELF developed its online travel database, which has information about the oxygen policies of Europe's major airlines ([www.europeanlung.org/en/lung-disease-and-information/air-travel/](http://www.europeanlung.org/en/lung-disease-and-information/air-travel/)). In putting this information together, the ELF team emailed and called airline companies trying to find out airline's policies and procedures. This took months to complete and was a very complicated process. The policies were not clear and often the people who answered the emails or phone calls had no idea of what the policies or procedures were.

ELF hopes that this booklet will make policy makers aware of the difficulties faced by people with lung disease who wish to live their lives as normally as possible and to continue to travel. Patients should be made more aware of how they can arrange oxygen, policies should be uniform across Europe, doctors should be educated in how to assess patients' needs for oxygen and airlines should treat patients with lung disease with care and respect.

We congratulate EFA on producing such a worthwhile resource which we hope will result in improving the travel opportunities of many people with lung and other long term medical conditions.



A person in a brown suit is seen from behind, pulling a dark red rolling suitcase through a modern, brightly lit corridor with large glass windows. The person is also carrying a brown shoulder bag. Other people are visible in the background, slightly out of focus. A blue banner with the word "Introduction" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

## Introduction

The European Federation of Allergy and Airway Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA) presents its booklet to the public to inform patients with chronic respiratory diseases, their carers and also airline staff about existing requirements for the use of oxygen therapy in air travel. This booklet aims, not only, to inform and educate its audiences, but also to present the situation of patients requiring oxygen for air travel as one requiring the attention of policymakers as a clear case of on-going discrimination and exploitation.

For some patients, they depend on oxygen therapy in order to be able to function. For others, it can improve the kind of life they can lead in terms of continuing to staying active. There are differences between individual patients using oxygen therapy since some people require its use at all times while others may only need it in case of emergency or at intervals during a flight. Oxygen therapy makes use of oxygen to improve the life of patients suffering from chronic respiratory diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Oxygen therapy is prescribed to patients who have a low level of oxygen in their bloodstream because of their disease and issuing a high concentration of oxygen can help relieve this problem. A low level of oxygen causes shortness of breath and thus affects many other organs and cause negative effects, such as heart problems. Patients with portable oxygen concentrators (POCs) are on long-term oxygen therapy and are typically using oxygen therapy for as many as 16 hours per day. Patients who use cylinders with compressed oxygen are often using oxygen for more variable lengths of time, up to 8 hours, which depends upon the size of a cylinder in use and flow rate of oxygen required for an individual. Such cylinders are often used for emergencies or back-up.



EFA strongly believes oxygen should be available to patients in need **at all times and free of charge** while they are travelling on aircraft. However, we also understand the need for airlines to request documentation which demonstrates approval for a patients' need for oxygen by a medical doctor. With regards to bringing portable oxygen concentrators (POCs) onto aircraft, due to the fact neither the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) nor the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) consider the equipment to be hazardous, these should be acceptable for all airlines. EFA believes the following conditions would greatly improve comfort and safety for those who need to travel with oxygen:

1. Airlines should complement the need for oxygen with their supply free of charge either as a POC or as a tank with oxygen;
2. Airlines should offer transport for an empty oxygen tanks in the hold as cargo and a POC, as well as the required amount of batteries free of charge, which once in the cabin passengers should be permitted to use at any time until leaving the aircraft;
3. Airlines should accept one single set of Medical Information for Fitness to Travel or Special Assistance (MEDIF) forms as suggested by EATA<sup>1</sup>
4. Under ideal circumstances, oxygen tank stations should be provided at airports so disembarking passengers using oxygen therapy can refill their oxygen tanks upon arrival.
5. Lastly, approval by airlines for the use of permitted personal devices or oxygen supplied by the airline itself should be granted within a 48 hour time period after a request is made. This is especially important to ensure that passengers on business trips who need to travel with oxygen on short notice can proceed with their business travel plan like the rest of the working population.

EFA believes the conditions above accurately demonstrate the needs of patients requiring oxygen for travel and could help to solve many current issues for them. Other issues which are not specifically addressed above will be detailed in later sections of the booklet.

---

<sup>1</sup> See : <http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/923/IATA%20MEDIF%20FORM.pdf>

## Objectives for the brochure

In the following, EFA will use patient testimonials from people's real experiences of travelling with European airlines where the use of oxygen therapy proved problematic. These stories are references to real life experiences of patients requiring oxygen for air travel who discuss many specific issues widely encountered. These are very important in our assessment of certain airline policies and helped identify some of these issues as discriminatory. In addition, readers will find a list of 'national airlines,' e.g. the most commonly used airlines in Europe, with all information they offer openly to the public. This demonstrates the wide variety in policies and fees associated with oxygen therapy. Simultaneously it provides a central reference point for patients who wish to select the airline which has the best policies for their voyages. This information can also be access on the annually updated European Lung Foundation's (ELF) air travel database<sup>2</sup>.

In 2010, ELF contacted airlines across Europe to find out about their policies for people travelling with oxygen to create an online database for patients and carers. This database and accompanying information has been since updated and will in the future continue to reflect accurate airline policies for patients requiring oxygen for air travel. The ELF clearly identified the need for clearer information to be available for people with lung diseases for their air travels.

Following ELF's model, this booklet presents updated public information from select national airlines and an analysis of EASA rules and regulations interprets technical information for both passengers and cabin crews so all are aware of what should be expected of them. Further illustrating EFA's concerns is the different prices between destinations and airlines for patients requiring oxygen, seeming to exploit the health status of the passenger by charging up to seven times the normal price of a standard airline ticket.

Furthermore, EFA wishes to reinforce our argument that patients with respiratory disease and a need for oxygen during travel should have **oxygen available at all times** and free of charge. Individual rules by airlines for the transport and use of oxygen have resulted in a situation with unacceptable inequalities. However, EFA must point out that this booklet is not the first instance in which free oxygen has been demanded for patients with chronic respiratory diseases.

In 2012, Transport Committee of the European Parliament (EP) approved an own initiative report (INI) on "The Rights of Europeans travelling by Air". The report, approved by a vast majority (41 for, 1 against with 4 abstentions), sought to require the provision of free oxygen by all airlines in Europe. This effort by the OIR's rapporteur MEP Keith Taylor and colleagues at the EP shows clear agreement in political opinion on this topic at the European level<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, the European Commission did not place this on their agenda and, as a result, in the spirit of MEP Taylor's efforts, along with all of the MEPs in the Transport Committee, EFA continues the campaign.

---

<sup>2</sup> [www.europeanlung.org/en/lung-disease-and-information/air-travel/airline-index/](http://www.europeanlung.org/en/lung-disease-and-information/air-travel/airline-index/)

<sup>3</sup> Other MEPs supporting the legislation included shadow rapporteurs Artur Zasada, David-Maria Sassoli, Nathalie Greisbeck, Jacqueline Foster and Jaromir Kohlíek

## Practical help for people who have to travel with oxygen

As a reference point for patients with chronic respiratory diseases, EFA offers advice and useful information necessary for making travel reservations that accommodate a patient's oxygen needs. In their travels, familiarity with the policies in airports of departure and arrival is extremely important. A passenger may need to contact their local airport directly to confirm their procedures for taking oxygen containers through customs, security and onto the plane. An airline does not necessarily have control over airport procedures between check-in and boarding, so it is the responsibility of a passenger to be prepared. In contacting the local airport at each end of a journey, for both single and return flights, passengers with oxygen needs can ensure there is no added stress as the result of arriving unprepared to the airports. However, readers should bear in mind EFA did not conduct research with the airports in Europe to survey their policies for travelling with oxygen; therefore EFA is unable to provide any clear advice to patients in this regard.

Prior to booking a reservation, it is important to recognize the following:

- liquid oxygen is prohibited for use on commercial airlines; the only aircraft permitted to carry or utilize liquid oxygen are helicopters serving as air ambulances
- While air carriers may elect to provide compressed oxygen to passengers, regulations do not allow passengers to provide their own compressed oxygen for use on-board aircraft as it is seen as hazardous material both as carry-ons and as cargo
- Improper transport of either liquid or compressed oxygen can present significant safety risks resulting in operators being liable for large civil penalties.

Many airlines already permit patients to bring their portable oxygen concentrators on-board of their aircraft for no additional charges as long as they are on the Federal Aviation Authority's (USA) list of approved POCs for usage. On their websites, a vast majority of airlines will disclose a list of POCs and confirm the possibility to use them during flight or they will provide contact information so you can call their medical services departments to confirm if your device is permissible.

When booking your reservation, airlines permitting the use of POCs or offering to supply oxygen, whether for a fee or at a cost, require a *minimum* of 48 hours' notice before travel to ensure approval for its use. In addition, some airlines restrict the number of passengers per flight who are permitted to use oxygen on board the aircraft. It is highly recommended that patients requiring oxygen book their flights early and contact their airline immediately to start the approval process. On most airlines, this is possible by calling, e-mailing or faxing their 'Medical Assistance Service' and completing the forms specified by each airline.

While the information above is important to keep in mind for a patient or carer during travels, there are other factors to consider. For instance, each of the airlines in Europe has different policies for oxygen on board their aircraft. As a result, EFA presents within this booklet information to assist patients choose a best airline fitting their needs. It also provides the public with an overview of the inconsistencies of the information these patients experience when travelling in Europe.

## **The case against discrimination**

Passengers requiring oxygen on-board aircrafts still have to overcome many obstacles when trying to travel by plane. The rules and prices regarding the use of oxygen on flight vary considerably between airlines in Europe, often leading to confusion for travellers. Many airlines do not even allow the use of personal oxygen concentrators (POCs) and the price of oxygen containers provided by an airline is usually several times higher than the price of the flight ticket itself.

The EU Treaties guarantee the right of all citizens to free movement. Despite this fact, passengers requiring oxygen on-board aircrafts are still experiencing discrimination and are asked to pay for unjustifiably high-priced services by some airlines, whilst others offer oxygen to passengers for free with sufficient prior notice after booking. EFA believes current measures are clearly discriminatory and pose a significant burden on passengers suffering from respiratory diseases, often making travel stressful, challenging or even prohibitively expensive.

Not too long ago, passengers travelling with wheelchairs experienced similar discrimination – they experienced problems with booking their flights, were often denied boarding or required to travel with and pay for an accompanying person, were not granted satisfactory assistance and had to pay an extra levy for being transported and boarding the plane.

In February 2004 the European Commission launched the first regulation establishing common rules on compensation and assistance to passengers who were denied boarding. In June 2006, a second regulation establishing specific rights for passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility was adopted. However, disabled people were still experiencing discriminatory treatment at airports and on-board aircraft.

After several high profile lawsuits against air carriers and unflagging advocacy activities of non-government organisations (NGOs) representing disabled people at the European level, the Commission decided to clarify the regulation and put an end to a common practice of finding loopholes in the regulation. In 2012, guidelines providing a clear interpretation of the text were published.

As a result of these legislative changes, disabled passengers may now travel much easier around Europe. Travellers with disabilities or reduced mobility are entitled to assistance at the airport at no additional charge, have the right to bring up to two mobility equipment devices with them and to get essential information in accessible formats, to travel with their guide dog on board, to be located closer to toilet facilities as well as other provisions.

Disabled passengers can no longer be asked to provide a medical certificate unless there is a doubt they might not be fit enough to travel and they do not need to be accompanied by another person if they are normally self-sufficient in their home and local environments. The rules and its interpretation are now clear and easy to understand for passengers who require a wheelchair.

Although the regulation states that disabled people should have the same possibility to travel as any other person, this is not necessarily always the case for people requiring oxygen during flights. Each airline has a different policy with regards to the acceptance of passengers requiring oxygen, which makes travelling by air complicated and often very expensive.

One of the most pressing issues is the cost of the air travel. While some airlines provide oxygen services for free, the airlines companies may not allow people to bring their own portable oxygen concentrator or cylinder on to their planes while simultaneously charging hundreds of Euros to use the supplementary oxygen that the airline provides. The pre-notification period also differs significantly – it may vary between 48 hours to almost a week. This practice is clearly discriminatory and completely unnecessary.

In the past, disabled people had to pay an extra levy to be able to travel with their wheelchair. These charges were found discriminatory and wheelchair-bound passengers are now entitled to all assistance services free of charge. EFA believes that people in need of oxygen on-board aircrafts should be entitled to the same rights – they should be able to use their own POCs on the flight or an airline's own oxygen containers for free.

This, for example, is a common practice in the US. Passengers may now carry their own portable oxygen concentrators on all domestic flights, these devices only have to be approved by a federal authority and passengers have to comply with pre-boarding conditions, such as using only devices that are approved, have a medical certificate and pre-notify the air carrier in advance.

Within its memo from June 2012, MEMO/12/422, issued by the European Commission on the rights of passengers with reduced mobility travelling by air, the EC acknowledges openly the different rules on the transport of oxygen causes confusing situations. Furthermore, the EC admits there are no standardised rules for the carriage of oxygen due to safety reasons or concerns. Nevertheless, the EC states explicitly all information with regards to the provision of oxygen or right for patients to bring their own oxygen must be clearly available to passengers and the oxygen should be available by carriers at a reasonable price.

As a result, EFA evidences within this booklet that many carriers fall short of these conditions described by the EC. Following the best practice set through legislation approved for passengers requiring wheelchairs, EFA would request legislation comparable to that enforced on the behalf of patients requiring oxygen. The memo has no explicit statement regarding how POCs and empty oxygen cylinders are considered safe commodities for air travel by IATA and the FAA, which approves of the carriage of both on-board aircrafts.

EFA therefore uses evidence presented in this booklet to call on policy makers to ensure that charges for using oxygen on-board planes will be dropped and rules regarding the use of oxygen on-board aircrafts to harmonize across the European Union. Travellers requiring oxygen should not be discriminated against any further and they should enjoy same rights as any other passengers on airplanes.



## A Word from Keith Taylor, MEP

"Last year in the Transport and Tourism Committee of the European Parliament, my colleagues and I worked hard to pass by a significant majority an Own Initiative Report (INI), for which I was the rapporteur, endorsing the rights of passengers on air transport. The passing of this INI sent a clear signal to the European Commission that Members of European Parliament from all parties expect equitable treatment of passengers on-board aircraft.



Thus, I am extremely pleased by EFA's efforts to release its new booklet evidencing unjustifiable barriers existing for patients requiring oxygen on-board aircraft. Extortionate fees and inconsistencies between airlines on policies permitting the use of oxygen are a problem requiring strong action from the European institutions to remedy such problems among European airlines and enforce recommendations made by both the European Aviation Safety Authority (EASA) and International Aviation Transport Association (IATA).

My hope is this booklet can raise awareness of difficulties facing airline passengers requiring oxygen and sound the alarm for acts of discrimination. I wholly endorse EFA's call for not only a universal Medical Information for Fitness to Travel or Special Assistance (MEDIF) form for all European airlines, but also the allowance of personal oxygen concentrators (POCs) carriage on-board. Lastly, I support their call for all European airlines to offer medical oxygen to passengers free of charge to enable free movement of people in need of oxygen as any other EU citizen and as the airlines do already for people in need of a wheelchair."

Keith Taylor, MEP





## **Stories from patients on travelling with oxygen in Europe**

## Travelling as patients with oxygen needs

As any patient with oxygen needs can testify, daily life already presents many challenges. Tasks like going up many stairs or walking to the local grocery store are ordinary for healthy individuals; however special assistance and a ready supply of oxygen are required for some patients with chronic respiratory diseases. Unfortunately, as a result of the needs for a patient on oxygen therapy, travelling by plane can nowadays be very complicated and even prohibitively expensive.

### *The Stories*

*"I travel for vacation and to visit my sons because they do not live in my city anymore. I do it only about two or three times per year as a result of the problems I have flying with the concentrator. . .*

*Some companies do not allow me to use the oxygen from my own concentrator during the flight and instead impose large fees in order so that I must rent one of their company's - sometimes even the exact same model I own myself! In some airlines where I am permitted to use my own, the cabin crew does not know what it is for and ask me for documents that I have already presented with the airline authorities, at the check in at the airport and in the security lines. . . it seems they are powerless and shocked by something completely new, checking with the pilot of the plane to make sure they do not object to the equipment's use during the flight. It should be apparent that there is great disorder to travel with these "methods" and lack of information for the professionals of the aviation sector.*

*I would like all companies to have the same criteria, that when you purchase your ticket you can indicate your problem immediately, inform them that you will bring your concentrator or will need them to make one available for you, and that it is not an odyssey to achieve any of this. I would like to bring my own concentrator with pertinent document and to be a normal passenger."*

**▲ Consuelo Pérez, Madrid, Spain**

*"I [travelled with an airline] from London to Dublin, and [had suddenly] been informed (less than 36 hours before my flight) that I will be required to pay fees of 400 Euro for oxygen to be provided on a flight that cost £203. This cost was not mentioned on [their] website. According to [the] website reasons to fly. . . include [the] airline being friendly with award winning customer service and being transparent with no hidden fees. Booking oxygen with [this] airline has been a time consuming, stressful and incredibly frustrating experience. All but one of [the] customer service representatives have been unknowledgeable, rude, unhelpful and unable to understand that needing oxygen on a flight might be the cause of some stress. So far I have had to make at least five phone calls to [their] 0871 number. During the latest of which . . . I was told that I can either pay for the oxygen or cancel my flight and get a £60 refund, meaning I would not only miss my trip but lose £140. I am not a rich woman - I booked with [the airline] because on the one occasion I have used them before the oxygen was free and their customer service was competent. Last time I flew I simply emailed [them], faxed my forms and the oxygen was provided free of charge.*

*This time I called to book and request oxygen and spoke to someone who didn't know if [they] provided that service. So I decided to book online, and then phone to request the oxygen. I booked and called again - the next representative told me to fill in the forms provided on [a partner airline's] website, then send them via the website. I filled in the forms and sent them to the . . . email, as there is no email address attached to any of the forms or web pages about respiratory illness as far as I could see. Due to the nature of my illness I needed a new test to see how much oxygen I require, and I received the required form filled in by the doctor and sent it on to [them]. . . one week before travel, well within [the] 72 hour notice window. I received a reply [the next day] saying I could not use that address because I did not hold a . . . card (despite the website saying the . . . phone number can be used by non-card holders - I don't see why the email address should be different).*

*There was no mention of a charge for the service in that email, nor was the correct email to send the forms to supplied - rather I was directed to the 'wheelchair assistance form' online (?! how is that relevant) and given the 0871 customer service number again. I called it and was assured I would be contacted [at the beginning of the week] to book the Oxygen. I was not. The [following day] I was left a message stating that they were sorting it out, and would phone me to confirm and take payment. I thought that was a mistake and then this morning was left another message stating I needed to pay the 400 Euro today. I have just phoned [the] 0871 number again, and was told I could not contact anyone. . . directly as they did not have the contact details. Apparently I must either pay or cancel. The supervisor of the person I spoke to refused to talk to me."*

**▲ Sandra Millet, St Albans, United Kingdom**

*"... the steward on the plane wanted me to turn off my machine on take-off and landing. I explained to her that it was not oxygen but a concentrator so she had to ask the pilot if that was ok as she did not know what I was talking about but he seemed to know about it so everything was ok. . . When I travelled back from Brussels the steward said I should have booked a ticket for the machine. I thought he was joking but no he was serious."*

**▲ Betty Sutton, Bray, Ireland**

*"I have already booked a flight to San Miguel in the Azores [on an European airline]. They told me that my Father can't bring his portable O2 machine that is FAA approved but could use their O2 for an additional fee. They have quoted me 80 Euro per bottle and per his doctor's request he would need 5 bottles on the way there and 6 bottles on the way back. I have already rented a portable device for the week that he can't use on the plane. [The airline] wants to charge me over 1,000 EUR for the round trip flight. I don't think this sounds right and I am so upset about this. This was supposed to be a wonderful family vacation and it sounds like they are taking advantage of a health care situation."*

▲ **Sandra Warshauer, Swansea, United States**



*"Coming home from Cyprus. . . we got to the airport and checked in and were told there would be no oxygen on board. Eventually, they said it was there, we went through to the boarding gate and my name is asked to come to the gate. I go to the desk they said we do not have the oxygen on board and they asked if I would be able to fly home without it. I said NO WAY! After holding the flight home for 30 mins they eventually got some oxygen off another plane for me. By this time I am stressed and crying."*

*"So now every time I want to be able to fly to continental Europe it is a head ache and very stressful for me. I have to pay for oxygen abroad in Cyprus, as it was £150 for a week for a concentrator. I find it is so stressful for us, people who need oxygen for flying, and do not see why we should not be able to go without any fuss or hassle. It is the airports and airlines that cause us to become upset. They never apologize though and that is what makes me so cross because I know I am not the only person who has experienced this because a few of my friends who got the same illness as me get the hassle."*

▲ **Karen Farminer, Laindon, United Kingdom**

*"At the age of 60 years old, I was diagnosed with COPD... and my pulmonologist . . . prescribed me oxygen therapy. In addition, as I informed him of an arranged trip . . . to Maurice Island, he then advised me to obtain oxygen for use in the airplane.*

*So I contacted the company. . . who then asked me for 380 EUR as a supplementary fee to each flight. My trip was arranged in advance for more than a year because it was organized with an association. At this moment a choice was required from me: pay the extra . . . fees and spend 10 days at the hotel because my budget would be consumed by the supplementary fees or to go on the trip without oxygen. I made the choice to go without oxygen.*

*This year, I have planned a trip to Martinique where my son lives currently. My calculation is once again quickly realized: I cannot pay for the trip AND an oxygen tank. In addition, I will leave with a group and I wonder how I can combine the group and the requirements of the airline. So, my decision in the end was that I could not go on the trip. Currently, as I am truly dependent upon my oxygen for physical activities, I wish for a life as normal as possible during my retirement. I currently am a volunteer in a nursing home, help various associations, and keep myself busy in my garden but I am condemned to "stand down" and never go on a plane, kept waiting until the next occasion my son will return to France to visit."*

**▲ Betty Moureaux, Portieux, France**

*"On an international flight with an European airline, as a patient with LAM [Lymphangioleiomyomatose], from Spain to Argentina it was required to pay 900 EUR for oxygen separately on my return trip. The company allowed the carriage of a personal concentrator but it was not possible to obtain the necessary batteries to allow for its use for 150% of the duration of the flight. As a result, it was necessary to pay this high fee.*

*After not travelling for almost 10 years because of the medical condition, this year I would like to travel again but I have had many bad experiences with airlines, like the above, who do not accept me without added costs or complications since I must use oxygen for the whole flights. The cabin crews, even if they are very cooperative, did not seem to know how to use the equipment and as a result my daughter must come with me to attend to my needs.*

*I think oxygen use in flights should be complementary for passengers and all airline companies should have identical policies for all airline companies to make travel with oxygen easier."*

**▲ Susanna Mónaco, Spain**

*"Last June I travelled from London to Zurich and back... I informed the airline in advance but when I arrived at Heathrow to check-in I was treated just like any [healthy] passenger. The security staff did pass my Airsep Focus concentrator round the security scanner, but otherwise the departure was like all others. I even walked the long walk to the plane.*

*The return trip was much better. I was asked if I needed help to get to the departure gate, which I didn't. When I got to the departure gate I was given pre-boarding so that I wouldn't be jostled by everybody else. In all [the return was] a very pleasant experience."*

**▲ Malcolm Waeillans, Bucks, United Kingdom**

*"At 81 years old, oxygen has been prescribed as a requirement 24 hours day. For travels to Tunisia, my child prepared and assembled all the forms necessary for the airline company: the medical certificate, the clearance contract for the use of a personal oxygen concentrator. . . In actuality, I used the concentrator throughout my time in the airport until boarding, which was also distant from other passengers. Then, once in the plane, the company put oxygen to my disposal as a service to be charged because in the end they did not accept the use of my portable oxygen concentrator."*

**▲ Ahmed Ladjnef, Alpes Maritimes, France**

*"I have Pulmonary Hypertension and need oxygen for flying. I think it is disgusting that airlines get away with charging ridiculous sums of money for on board oxygen. I try to fly with the airlines that provide it free when I can.*

*I was flying with some friends from Murcia in Spain to Bournemouth UK, which I had done many times before with [this particular airline]. I had booked my oxygen and paid my £100 prior to the flight and had faxed my Fit to Fly Letter to them. We got to the airport and at the desk all was fine, they confirmed my oxygen. My friends boarded first as normal, as disabled, I waited until last. They then said I had to wait as they were refuelling?? Eventually they let me through but no one accompanied me. I ended up getting on the wrong plane so had to climb up another flight of steps to get to mine, with my hand luggage. I got on the plane and was told by the steward that I couldn't fly because they had no oxygen, I showed him my letter and my receipt and he argued like mad with me.*

*By then I am sobbing, my friends came down the plane to assist and others said how they had flown with me the week before and all was fine. The Captain then appeared and told me I would have to get off the plane, I said but I am fit to fly he said no you're not without oxygen and we haven't any! I was the chucked off the plane and my friend came with me leaving her husband on board. My suitcase was ready and waiting at the bottom of the stairs. She had nothing. No one came to help us and I was beside myself. Out of breath and helpless, we walked back through customs and the Spanish guy was so shocked no plane had landed and couldn't figure out where we came from!*

*The . . . staff were hopeless and offered no help but got us on another flight the next day. Not once did they ask where we would stay or how we would get there. Luckily my husband came and got us. On my return to UK I wrote a long complaint letter to [the airline] and heard nothing... I was treated appalling by the staff on board the plane and can literally say I was traumatised."*

**▲ Jane Taylor, Berks, United Kingdom**



*My name is Luísa Soares Branco, I am 60 years old and I am retired. In my capacity of President of RESPIRA's board I often receive invitations to speak in different meetings with GP and specialists. Four years ago I received an invitation from a hospital in the island of Azores (SATA airlines) and three years ago I have been also in a General meeting of EFA in Rome (TAP airlines).*

*For both of them I needed a certificate from my doctor: "Medical information for fitness to travel" (MEDIF) and I had to wait around a month, in order to receive permission to travel. In both cases I had to pay for the oxygen more than the ticket's price. In both cases I experiment long and painful delays in Portela airport Lisbon, Ponta Delgada airport and in Rome Fiumicino either because security reasons - the staff from the oxygen company had to be cleared by the police, or because I was treated like a disable person taken in and out the airplane in an ambulance.*

*During the flights I noticed that the staff was not used to deal with a passenger with oxygen needs. Sometimes they looked frightened, sometimes they look bored, like "Oh not again!"*

*I would like to recommend to:*

- EASA to harmonize rules for travelling with oxygen.*
- The authorities that are managing the airports to promote special security rules for people with oxygen needs and their companions.*
- To airline companies: sites more user friendly and readable and suitable training of their staff.*

#### **Luisa Soares Branco, Lisboa, Portugal**

*"I am 64 years old and require oxygen 24 hours a day. For vacation, I travel often in France and my medical care provider brings my oxygen to the resorts. This year, my son married and we gave notice of our trip to Italy for the ceremony. My son was very busy making arrangements with the company. My medical care provider for oxygen put us in the disposition of portable oxygen concentrator for the airline with its certificate for my clearance. During boarding, I was not assisted. To the contrary, when I arrived the care provider seemed to have forgotten to mention my situation requiring me to change seats in the plane. The use of my portable oxygen concentrator during the flight was not a problem. My suggestion: the concentrator is considered a piece of hand luggage and as a result it was necessary to burden my husband with its extra batteries so they could be brought on board as well.*

#### **Marie-Josée Desombre, Le Petit Quevilly, France**

*"I have idiopathic pulmonary arterial hypertension. This is a condition where the pressure in my lungs is so great that it is destroying my heart. It is a terminal condition. Holidays are important to us as we want to create memories for the ones we leave behind, plus, of course, to enjoy ourselves.*

*My first disaster was when I travelled with Monarch. We have to pay on this airline the sum of one hundred pounds each way for a flight to any part of Europe. My oxygen failed, THREE times, in the end the steward bought me the small canister with a full face mask. The trouble is this delivers oxygen at twice the amount I required. Fortunately no damage was done. We sent a letter of complaint to the airline and they apologised and returned my fee for this service but the consequences could have been very serious.*

*My second story occurred when . . . the beginning of the flight was a bit bumpy so rightly so the stewardesses had to stay in their seats longer than I would have liked as I needed the oxygen fetching sooner rather than later. Eventually when they could leave their seats they were more concerned with selling lottery tickets than getting my oxygen, this even though my husband had specifically told them on getting seated that it was very important I receive the oxygen once above the level the airline would allow it. I was getting more and more distressed as we watched the stewardesses discussing lottery tickets and drinks. In the end my husband asked them to get oxygen. It was obvious they had forgotten and a stewardess was dispatched to the back of the plane to collect it. On her return she was alarmed when she saw my very red face. She connected the oxygen to the cannula and gave it to me and said it was all set up. She then asked if she should inform the crew of my condition as I looked so bad. I said no, I will be ok when I have enough oxygen. Three minutes later I was distressed as I could tell there was no oxygen and thought the bottle was empty. My husband looked and she had not even turned it on!*

*All in all the stewardesses need more training in using oxygen and the bottles MUST be checked properly as a faulty one for me could have had dire consequences."*

**▲ Carole Ayrton, Halifax, United Kingdom**





## Instructions and prices from EU airlines

## Instructions from European Airlines

The information found below was collected in July 2013 and reflects the airline policies of that time. Any inaccuracies of the information available will only be the result of insufficient public information available on airline websites or an airline's policy information being very difficult to locate. This is not an exhaustive list of airlines and you may note some other airlines have not been included in this list as just a sampling was taken. We recommend that any airlines not listed in the booklet should be contacted before booking to ask about their airline policy. Policies and additional information may also be found on ELF's website through their database.

Furthermore, readers should note European airlines have different approaches to providing customer service for patients needing oxygen. Improved availability of clear and consistent information is an important step to prepare passengers with oxygen needs for their travels. The vast majority of the information is included as found on each airline's respective website or through the ELF database mentioned above. For many of the airlines, different points of contact are available to passengers based upon their point of departure



## AUSTRIA – AUSTRIAN AIRLINES



In principle, oxygen not belonging to the airline may only be transported in the cargo hold. There is an exception to this rule: personal oxygen equipment (up to 2 litres) may be transported in the cabin as long as it is required for medical reasons, the oxygen is not in gaseous form, and it is not used on board the aircraft. Passengers are asked to notify their booking office if they intend to take oxygen onto the aircraft with them.

Austrian Airlines allow passengers to bring their own portable oxygen concentrators on board their aircraft if they call the Special Cases Desk at +43 (0) 517 665 1043 at least 48 hours before flying so the airline can accommodate necessary requirements. The following portable oxygen concentrators are allowed:

- Lifestyle AIRSEP Corporation
- Freestyle AIRSEP Corporation
- Eclipse Sequel Technologies
- Inogen One G2 Inogen Inc.
- Invacare XPO2 Invacare Corporation
- Solo<sup>2</sup> Invacare Corporation
- Evergo Respironics Inc.
- Delphi RS-00400 Delphi Medical Systems
- iGO De Vilbiss Healthcare
- Life Choice Int. Biophysis Corporations
- OxyLife Independence Oxygen
- Concentrator OxLife LLC

E-mail: [customer.relations@aua.com](mailto:customer.relations@aua.com) / [specialcases@austrian.com](mailto:specialcases@austrian.com)

## BALTICS (LATVIA & LITHUANIA) – AIR BALTIC



With advance notice of 24 hours, airBaltic can provide supplemental oxygen on all their flights. The cabin crew will assist passengers in connecting the oxygen bottles. This supply is separate from the in-built emergency supply. The oxygen provided by airBaltic is free of charge. A Medical Information Form filled in by a doctor is required upon reservation to verify the need for oxygen and the rate of flow per minute required. The supply will only be available on board the aircraft, so passengers have to make their own arrangements if they need oxygen while at the airport or during a transfer. The passenger requiring air/ oxygen shall always be accompanied by qualified medical staff.

## **BELGIUM – BRUSSELS AIRLINES**



Brussels Airlines can supply extra oxygen on board (up to 5 litres of oxygen per minute). Passengers requiring oxygen on board aircrafts have to contact the Medical assistance Co-ordination Service on + 32 2 7233703 at least 48 hours before their departure at the latest. The MEDIF form has to be completed and the extra costs are to be paid in advance. A surcharge will apply per bottle.

Sleep apnoea: The passenger can use equipment on board against sleep apnoea. On all flights the equipment must be battery powered. Only on the A330 long haul to Africa electricity is offered in the Business class. The equipment cannot be used during take-off and landing. The power source cannot be guaranteed. Therefore having own medical equipment is essential; passenger also need to bring their own batteries.

You can either:

- contact Medical Assistance Co-ordination Service (M.A.C)  
**Phone : +32 2 723 3703 or fax: +32 2 723 3705**  
**Opening hours: Monday till Friday: from 9AM – 4 PM**  
**Saturday and Sunday: from 9AM – 1 PM**
- send an e-mail to [meda@brusselsairlines.com](mailto:meda@brusselsairlines.com)
- visit your travel agent

Passengers in need of assistance only in the airport should complete the general form ([http://web.brusselsairlines.com/forms/wheelchair\\_assistance.pdf](http://web.brusselsairlines.com/forms/wheelchair_assistance.pdf)) and send it to [meda@brusselsairlines.com](mailto:meda@brusselsairlines.com)

## **BULGARIA – AIR BULGARIA**



All passengers suffering from serious chronic ailments are required to submit written authorization from a doctor concerning the fitness of the passenger to travel by air. In some cases written notice by the passenger about releasing the airline from liability, related with changes of the passenger's medical status caused by the transport is required. Occasionally, additional oxygen may be carried on the aircraft if special arrangements are made to allow such passengers to travel.

## CROATIA - CROATIA AIRLINES



Croatia Airlines allows the use of portable oxygen concentrators on board only if powered by dry battery and if it is *not* pressurized. Medical clearance is not required for passengers using such a device.

A passenger who requires additional bottled oxygen for breathing during the flight has to travel with an escort who has been trained to handle the oxygen bottle. Medical clearance is mandatory. The medical information form is the basis for the flight clearance and it is to be completed by the doctor responsible for your treatment. The form that needs to be filled in can be found at:

<http://www.croatiaairlines.com/Travel-info/Special-passenger-categories/Disabled-persons>

The form shall be delivered (or faxed) to "Poliklinika prometne medicine" in Zagreb, Park prijateljstva 1, tel. +385 1 3832 353, fax. +385 1 3832 040 for the approval and verification of INCAD forms for Croatia Airlines flights. Filled in and verified, the form must be submitted when purchasing the ticket and one copy shall be attached to the passenger ticket because it must be submitted again during check in.

A passenger will have to sign a Declaration of indemnity and "Statement on the Transport of Patient Needing Medical Oxygenation During the Flight" has to be signed by the escort. Each carrier provides its own bottles for its own flight.

## CYPRUS — CYPRUS AIRWAYS



Cyprus Airways does not allow passengers to take their own oxygen on board their aircraft. However, they will provide it at an additional fee of 85 Euro per flight. The oxygen can be reserved when making a booking or at least 72 hours before the flight. Oxygen can be administered at 2 or 4 litres per minute and passengers will be required to fill out a medical certificate and to state whether they need continuous or intermittent oxygen. For further details please contact Cyprus Airways Reservation Offices.

## **CZECH REPUBLIC – CZECH AIRLINES**



Czech Airlines does not allow passengers to take their own oxygen on board their aircraft. However, they will provide oxygen at an additional charge. To use a small bottle for 2 hours, at a flow rate of 2 litres per minute, a charge of 50 Euro will be incurred. A large bottle can be used for 10 hours at a flow rate of 2 litres per minute, at a charge of 100 Euro. Oxygen has to be ordered when making a booking or reserved at least 72 hours before the flight. A medical certificate may also be required.

## **FINLAND – FINNAIR**



Finnair only permits supplementary oxygen on its medical flights for acute home transport (for passengers who become ill abroad). It does permit some portable oxygen concentrators (POC) on board their aircraft, but passengers will have to check with the Finnair Medadesk to find out whether their device is accepted.

A MEDIF form needs to be completed by a doctor several days before the flight and medical clearance needs to be accepted by the Finnair Medadesk. Passengers are responsible for having a sufficient supply of batteries to account for any possible deviations from the planned flight route.

Cabin attendants are only trained in first aid and are not permitted to give medication or administer injections.

## **FRANCE – AIR FRANCE**



Air France can provide therapeutic oxygen on board – this service is available for a fee of €300 per flight (both long-haul and continental) and must be requested during booking, no less than 48 hours before your departure. This service may not be available when departing from certain airports or on certain flights.

In most cases, passengers are offered a kit (Wenoll WS120) that has been specially designed for air travel. This system functions “on demand” (rather than providing “continuous” oxygen). The system is extremely compact, with 600 litres of oxygen, enabling passengers to travel safely on long-haul flights. These kits can only be used on board the aircraft. As long as passengers’ oxygen needs do not surpass 2 litres per minute, they will not need any kind of medical certificate to use this equipment. Otherwise, they will be asked to furnish a medical certificate, and if necessary, another type of equipment may be offered. Otherwise, an alternative solution may be offered, if it exists. A medical certificate is necessary.

Air France recommends the use of personal respiratory devices, such as an “oxygen concentrator respiratory device.” These devices can be used throughout the entire flight. However, Air France aircraft are not equipped with power outlets that enable you to plug in your respiratory devices on board. Therefore, we recommend that passengers verify

their device's ability to power itself, and, if needed, come prepared with additional batteries. The number of lithium batteries authorized on board is limited; please seek more information during booking.

Below is a list of FAA approved oxygen concentrator respiratory devices.

- Philips Respironics EverGo,
- Inogen One,
- Inogen One G2,
- Inova Labs Life Choice,
- Oxus, Inc. RS-00400,
- Invacare XPO2 – XPO100,
- Invacare SOLO2,
- SeQual Eclipse,
- DeVilbiss Helthcare iGO,
- AirSep FreeStyle,
- AirSep LifeStyle,
- Delphi Central Air, Evo,
- Oxlife Independence Oxygen Concentrator.

These devices can be used throughout the entire flight. We recommend that passengers inform the airline no less than 48 hours before the departure of their need to use respiratory devices.

## GERMANY - LUFTHANSA



Portable Oxygen Concentrators are allowed on all Lufthansa aircrafts provided that they are FAA approved. Power outlets must not be used for safety reasons (i.e. 150% battery capacity given the scheduled flight time are warranted). Two litres of gaseous oxygen cylinder may be used inside Europe but must not be carried to the USA – nevertheless cylinders need approval.

Lufthansa will not allow passengers' own oxygen on board their aircraft. However, they have a special oxygen service, with an 'on-demand' system, providing flow rates from 1 to 5.2 litres per minute, at a cost of 300 Euro on intercontinental flights and 150 Euro on continental flights. To order oxygen, passengers have to contact the Lufthansa Medical Desk on +49-69-696-55077 at least 48 hours before your flight. Prior to the flight passengers' fitness to fly will be assessed

If approval is required, to arrange an appointment, the Lufthansa **MEDICAL OPERATION CENTRE** should be contacted on: **+49 69 696 55077** (open daily from 06.00 hrs to 22.30 hrs).

**Tel:** +49 1805 838 038

**E-mail:** [ksfxrmed@dlh.de](mailto:ksfxrmed@dlh.de)

## GREECE – AEGEAN AIRLINES



Aegean airlines do not provide oxygen on board their aircraft. However, they will allow passengers to take their own oxygen on board. A doctor must ring the reservation helpline +30 210 6261000 and will be required to fill out a number of forms to certify that a passenger is fit to fly. The maximum size of the oxygen cylinder is 2 litres and further documentation certifying its suitability for use during the journey is needed.

**E-mail:** [wwwcontact@ageanair.com](mailto:wwwcontact@ageanair.com)

## HUNGARY – WIZZAIR



Wizzair accepts travel passengers who would normally need extra oxygen for medical reasons if they obtain a medical certificate confirming their fitness to travel by air without extra oxygen during the intended flight. Passengers who do not provide the required certificate at the check-in desk will not be allowed to travel. Passengers are not permitted to take their own extra oxygen on board our aircraft and Wizz Air does not provide oxygen on board in such cases.



## ICELAND – ICELAND AIR



Icelandair does not allow oxygen to be brought on board their aircraft; however, they do allow the following Portable Oxygen Concentrator (POC) systems on board:

- AirSep LifeStyle
- AirSep FreeStyle
- Inogen One
- SeQual Eclipse
- Respireonics, EverGo.

## IRELAND – AER LINGUS



Medical clearance is required for all passengers requesting oxygen. Passengers are required to provide a minimum of 48 hours notice of their intention to travel. Please contact Aer Lingus Special Assistance for more details.

Oxygen is on a request basis only and only one request can be accommodated per flight. Aer Lingus provides 2/4 litres per min continuously or 2/4 litres per min intermittently. A request for 4 litres continuously/intermittently cannot be accepted on flights between Dublin and San Francisco, Athens, Bucharest, Bourgas or any of the Canary Islands due to the duration of the flight and aircraft type.

Please also note carriage of oxygen in the Business Class cabin of longhaul A330/332 aircraft is not possible. These aircraft are frequently but not exclusively used for flights between Dublin and San Francisco, Orlando and Chicago. Oxygen can continue to be carried in the economy cabin. A fee of €100/£90/\$140 will be charged per sector and is payable at the time of booking. Passengers cannot bring their own oxygen on board. There is a list of brand name POCs allowed on the plane.

## IRELAND – RYANAIR



Ryanair does not allow passengers to bring their own oxygen on board their aircraft but oxygen can be provided at a flow rate of 2 litres and 4 litres per minute, at an additional cost of £100 or 100 Euro.

If a passenger requires therapeutic oxygen for use during the flight they should notify the Ryanair Special Assistance Line preferably on the same day as the flight booking is made or at the latest 7 days prior to travel, as there is a limitation on this service. Following this notification a RYANAIR THERAPEUTIC OXYGEN - MEDICAL CLEARANCE FORM will be sent to the passenger for completion and return.

- Ryanair supplies therapeutic oxygen at a continuous flow rate of 2 litres per minute – max duration of 250 minutes.
- Ryanair cannot accept passengers for travel requiring a continuous supply of oxygen of more than 250 minutes

A Ryanair therapeutic oxygen – medical clearance form must be completed and returned to Ryanair between 14 up to 2 days prior to travel, in order for it to be validated by Ryanair and returned before travel. The passenger must carry the validated Therapeutic Oxygen Medical Clearance form on all flights and cannot be accepted for travel without it. Ryanair is unable to provide a continuous supply of therapeutic oxygen for more than 250 minutes.

Some portable oxygen concentrators are allowed on board. To request permission, passengers have to call their local Special Assistance Line, preferably on the same day as making a booking or at the latest 7 days before your flight. Passengers must also carry a letter (in English) from their doctor (dated within 2 weeks of intended date of travel) which specifically confirms that:

- 1 The person is fit to travel.
- 2 Does not require a continuous supply of oxygen for more than 120 minutes at high flow or 240 minutes at the low flow rate.
- 3 The oxygen flow rate provided is suitable for the needs of the specific passenger.

To travel with a POC, passengers are asked to contact the Special Assistance Line to obtain prior approval and obtain a Medical Equipment Approval & Baggage Waiver letter. This approval & waiver letter must be presented at the Bag Drop desk or at the boarding gate if travelling with no checked baggage. The list of approved POCs:

- AirSep FreeStyle
- AirSep LifeStyle
- AirSep Focus
- AirSep Freestyle 5
- Delphi RS-00400 / Oxus RS-00400
- DeVilbiss Healthcare iGo
- Inogen One
- Inogen One G2
- Inogen One G3
- Inova Labs LifeChoice Activox
- International Biophysics LifeChoice / Inova Labs LifeChoice

- Invacare XPO2
- Invacare Solo 2
- OxyLife Independence Oxygen Concentrator
- Precision Medical EasyPulse
- Respironics EverGo
- Respironics SimplyGo
- SeQual Eclipse
- SeQual SAROS

If a passenger wishes to use a POC during flight, he /she must contact Ryanair's Special Assistance line (<http://www.ryanair.com/en/questions/contacting-customer-service>), which differs based upon where the passenger located, to obtain prior approval. For the use on board a 'Fit to Fly' form is required. This completed "Fit to Fly" form must be returned to Ryanair between 14 up to 2 days prior to travel for validation. The validated "Fit to fly form must be carried by the passenger on all flights and produced to our cabin crew on boarding the aircraft.

If the POC is to be used on board it is the passenger's responsibility to ensure that they have a sufficient number of fully charged batteries for the duration of the flight and any possible delays, as POC or batteries cannot be charged on board.

## ITALY – ALITALIA



To request appropriate assistance according, passengers requiring oxygen have to call the local Customer Relations Office at least 48 hours before departure. If they need a doctor's permission for air travel, they have to ask their doctor to complete the Medical Information Form (MEDIF) not more than seven days before the travel date. Passengers who suffer from chronic diseases or have physical disabilities may also show a FREMEC (Frequent Traveler Medical Card). Alitalia does not guarantee the provision of oxygen on board their aircraft nor the allowance to bring personal oxygen provisions on aircraft from all their points of origin and destinations.

## LUXEMBOURG – LUXAIR



Passengers needing a medical oxygen bottle during the flight have to inform the airline during the reservation and are subject to authorisation from the airline. Personal bottles are not allowed on board. If it is not possible to carry your own oxygen bottle, the airline is supposed to provide a bottle.

In case of doubts or for any further questions, please contact our Customer Service Centre

**Tel:** (+335) 2456 4242

**E-mail:** [callcenter@luxair.lu](mailto:callcenter@luxair.lu)

## MALTA — MALTESE AIRLINES



Air Malta does not allow passengers to take their own oxygen on board their aircraft; however, they can provide oxygen free of charge on scheduled flights. Air Malta offers only oxygen at 2 or 4 litres per minute for continuous or intermittent administration. On charter flights there is an additional charge, this is on a case-by-case basis and is dependent on the journey.

A Medical Certificate must be sent to their medical help desk for a doctor to determine whether or not a passenger is fit to fly. The Medical Help Desk can be contacted on +356 22999296.



## NETHERLANDS — KLM



KLM allows passengers to bring their POCs on board their aircrafts for an additional cost of 200 Euro per flight. A completed medical form is also required.

Passengers are allowed to take the following Personal Oxygen Concentrators with them on board:

- AirSep FreeStyle (Fed. Reg. Sep 12/06)
- AirSep LifeStyle displaying an RTCA sticker (SFAR No. 106, Aug 11/2005)
- Delphi RS-00400
- DeVilbiss Healthcare iGo
- Inogen One (SFAR No. 106, Aug 11/2005)
- Inogen One G2
- Invacare SOL02
- International Biophysics LifeChoice
- Invacare XPO100
- Oxlife Independence Oxygen Concentrator
- Respireonics EverGo (Fed. Reg. Sep 12/06)
- SeQual Technologies Eclipse (Fed. Reg. Sep 12/06)

If passengers bring their own POC they are asked to check in at the airport desk. *To use their own POC on board*, they have to make sure they make the request at least 48 hours prior to departure by calling KLM Telephone Reservations and consult with their physician provide the following information:

- The brand and type of POC.
- The medical need for using in-flight oxygen and the user's capability of seeing, hearing and responding to the alarms from the POC unit.
- The maximum oxygen flow rate corresponding to the pressure in the cabin under normal operating conditions. Please note: compared to use of a POC on the ground, use in a pressurized cabin during the flight requires about twice the amount of oxygen.
- The duration of oxygen use in hours and minutes. Doctor and/or passenger are responsible to bring enough oxygen for the duration of the flight.

Passengers need to bring batteries for the duration of the flight, overlay and unforeseen delays. Batteries containing Lithium can be divided in two types based on the content of Lithium:

- Batteries containing up to 8g Lithium: these can be carried unlimited.
- Batteries containing more than 8g but not more than 25g: 2 pieces are allowed if they are individually protected to prevent short circuit.

## POLAND – POLISH AIRLINES LOT



Passengers wishing to bring an oxygen cylinder on board the flight are required to pay a fee for each stage of the journey operated by LOT (LO), in accordance with the following price list:

- SHORT HAUL or domestic flights – EUR 150 or its equivalent
- LONG HAUL – EUR 300 or its equivalent

The passenger is required to have with them a completed copy of a Medical Information (MEDIF) form and Incapacitated Passengers Handling Advice (INCAD) form which are able to be downloaded from <http://www.lot.com/be/en/web/newlot/carriage-patients-on-stretchers>. The need of oxygen should be communicated to the airline no later than 72 hours before departure.

## PORTUGAL - TAP



TAP Portugal will provide additional oxygen and allow the use of portable oxygen concentrators on board their aircraft. Passengers will need to fill out an INCAD (Incapacitated Passengers Handling Advice) form and submit it at least 1 week in advance of your flight.

Passengers must be accompanied by someone who knows how to administer it, preferably a doctor or nurse. They may travel alone if they are able to administer it themselves, and only if authorised by the airline's medical services.

Use of the passenger's own oxygen is not allowed. Crew members cannot administer oxygen under any circumstances.

TAP has two types of tanks:

- **Large** - 3 litres/min / 7 litres/min
- **Small** - 2 litres/min / 4 litres/min

All tanks are supplied with a one-size mask.

Passengers needing to carry a POC – portable oxygen concentrator or CPAP – constant positive air pressure machine (to treat sleep apnoea) are allowed to do so on our flights. Please note that acceptance is subject to certain conditions. For further information please phone our **Contact Center** on – (351) 707 205 700.

## ROMANIA – TAROM



TAROM provides oxygen on board their aircrafts free of charge and no limitation in terms of number of persons requesting this service shall be applied. Passengers should however be aware that they are not allowed to take their own extra oxygen on board. Before issuing the ticket for a passenger with such a need, the consent must be requested from the TAROM, which provides the oxygen cylinders during the flight. The passenger is considered as medical case, therefore he/she has to present a certificate from his/her attending physician confirming that he/she can travel on the date and itinerary requested, as well as the quantity of oxygen/minute and whether the passenger needs the extra oxygen continuously or intermittently (specifying the time intervals).

### **It is mandatory to:**

- make the reservation and payment for the travel documents at least 72 hours before the departure date;
- present at the check-in desk a medical certificate issued by the attending physician, showing that the passenger can travel on the date and itinerary requested; the passenger to travel accompanied by an adult escort with medical qualification.

## RUSSIA – AEROFLOT



Aeroflot can only provide oxygen on board before and after the flight and in cases of an emergency. They do not allow passengers to take their own oxygen on board their aircraft. Sick passengers must have a medical certificate from a doctor. The carrier may refuse to provide air transport services to this category of passenger, if the passenger's physical condition poses a threat to flight safety or causes discomfort to other passengers.

## SCANDINAVIA (DENMARK, NORWAY & SWEDEN) – SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES (SAS)



SAS will allow passengers to take their own compressed oxygen weighing a maximum of 5 kilograms on board their aircraft. The measurement of the cylinders must not exceed the weight or dimensions permitted for hand baggage (115 cm/46 in and 8 kg/18lbs). SAS also provide oxygen at an additional charge of 335 Euro per journey on intercontinental flights or 150 Euro per journey on continental flights.

In both instances, passengers must request this service at the time of booking or at least 72 hours before their flight. A Medical Information form (MEDIF) must be filled out and the request has to be authorised by SAS Medical Department. Liquid oxygen is not allowed because it is considered a dangerous good. Contact SAS Medical Sales before the flight so that the check-in staff knows that you are carrying oxygen.

### **SAS Medical Sales**

Tel.: +45 32 32 68 98

Fax: +45 32 32 64 72

Email: [sasmedical@sas.dk](mailto:sasmedical@sas.dk)

### **Opening hours:**

Monday-Friday 8am-4pm CET

## SPAIN - IBERIA



Iberia's booking staff, advised by the Medical Service, will provide passengers with the information they need, booking the most suitable seat and requesting the necessary services. Both Iberia's aircraft and Civil Aviation regulations limit the number of passengers with reduced mobility per flight, according to the type of disability and other circumstances. In order to anticipate the resources needed for their correct provision, passengers are asked to book 48 hours prior to their intended departure.

Passengers are encouraged to contact their local Iberia Booking Centres for more information on travelling with reduced mobility or special needs.

## SWITZERLAND



The use of private bottles on board is not permitted. The airline provides company oxygen bottles for use on board. The oxygen bottle will be installed on your seat and ready to use. Order the supplement oxygen at least 72 hours before departure and passengers are required to fill out a SAF/MEDIF form. The oxygen is confirmed after received payment of the respective costs.

## TURKEY – TURKISH AIRLINES



Turkish Airlines do not allow people to bring their own oxygen on board their aircraft but provide additional oxygen free of charge. This must be booked when making a reservation and a series of forms may need to be completed by a doctor stating the necessity of the oxygen and the flow rate flow rate required.



## **UNITED KINGDOM – BRITISH AIRWAYS**



British Airways provides oxygen in flight for medical reasons for no additional charges on both international flights and those within continental Europe. The oxygen must be requested at least 48 hours in advance of travel. Oxygen can be provided only to one passenger per flight so availability may be restricted and as a result if a passenger needs to use oxygen on board they must book it well in advance. The medical information form needs to be completed by a passenger and their doctor before we can clear you to travel. British Airways cannot provide oxygen on the ground at any airports.

Medical information must be provided by the doctor who has been treating the passenger. This is necessary so that British Airways can ascertain fitness to fly, and then take the appropriate actions to arrange the oxygen provision on your flight. There is no charge for this service and the rate of oxygen provided is either 2 or 4 litres per minute. To request oxygen on-board a passenger must call their local British Airways Office.

British Airways also allow FAA approved portable oxygen concentrators (POC) on board their aircraft. The POC is included in a passenger's cabin baggage allowance. In order to accommodate this, let them know when booking a flight.

Passengers will need to complete part one of British Airways' MEDIF form and ask their doctor to complete part two. Once the form has been sent to their Passenger Medical Clearance Unit (PMCU) the airline will be able to consider the request and inform a passenger whether he/she is fit to fly.

Personal Medical Clearance Unit contact details:

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8738 5444

Fax: +44 (0) 20 8738 9644

e-mail: [pmcu.pmcu@ba.com](mailto:pmcu.pmcu@ba.com)

## UNITED KINGDOM – EASY JET



With the exception of emergency situations Easy Jet does not provide supplementary oxygen. Small compressed air or oxygen cylinders are permitted in hand baggage for personal medical use only. They must not exceed 0.5 metres in length, with a maximum diameter of 250 mm.

Passengers will need a medical certificate confirming the cylinders are required for medical reasons and that they are fit to fly. Passengers are permitted to carry a maximum of 2 cylinders and they must be placed in the overhead locker or under the seat and are requested to tell the cabin crew when they are boarding.

Oxygen concentrators (either mains or battery powered) are permitted on board and medical certification is not required. Batteries will have to be used if the passenger needs oxygen on board (be sure the batteries have enough power for the duration of the trip, including possible delays).

Chemical oxygen generators are not permitted.







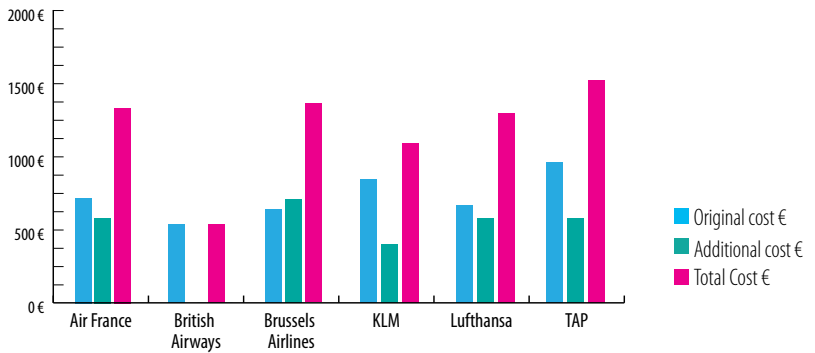
## Cases for the added cost of travelling with oxygen provided by the airlines

## Cases for the added cost of travelling with oxygen provided by the airlines

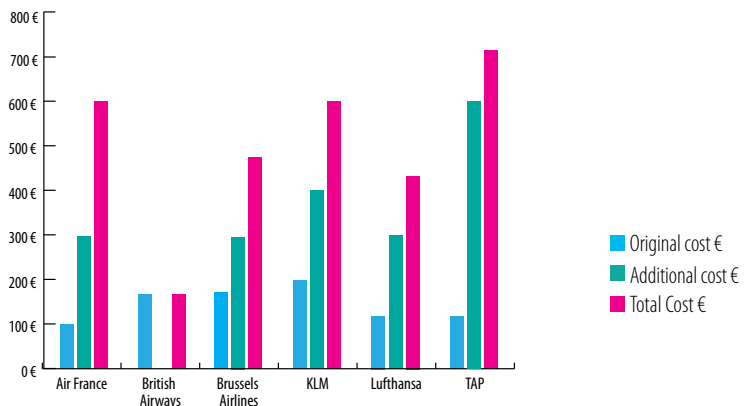
Although some airlines listed previously will provide oxygen free of charge, others will request additional fees of up to the cost of the ticket purchased. In the following section, scenarios are presented as case studies which show the extortionate pricing of oxygen therapy for patients wishing to travel by airplane in Europe as well as from Europe to abroad.

The prices are of return tickets booked for destinations in November 2013 during late July 2013. As will be demonstrated below, there is variability in the prices demanded for an airline to supply oxygen provided to patients. While some airlines, such as Lufthansa, will supply unlimited oxygen on demand per flight, others like TAP and Air France will provide oxygen at a per bottle rate applicable to both flights within Europe and intercontinental flights.

### Total Cost for intercontinental (long haul) flights, e.g. London-New York.



### Total cost for flights in continental Europe (short haul), e.g. London-Madrid.



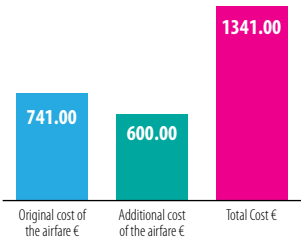
AIR FRANCE



Paris to New York City

Original cost of the airfare: **€741.00**  
Cost to use oxygen: €300 per bottle, per flight  
Total additional cost (minimum 2 bottles): = **€600.00**

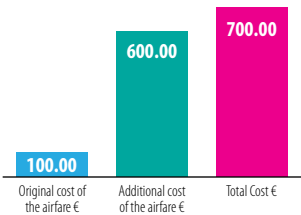
**Total Cost: €1341.00**



Paris to Marseille

Original cost of the airfare: **€100.00**  
Cost to use oxygen: €300 per bottle, per flight  
Total additional cost (minimum 2 bottles): **€600.00**

**Total Cost: €700.00**



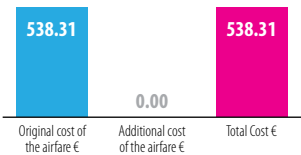
BRITISH AIRWAYS



London to New York City

Original cost of the airfare: **€538.31**  
Cost to use oxygen: €0.00\*\*  
*- limitation of one passenger on oxygen per flight\*\**  
Total additional cost: **€0.00**

**Total Cost: €538.31**



London to Madrid

Original cost of the airfare: **€167.43**  
Cost to use oxygen: €0.00\*\*  
*- limitation of one passenger on oxygen per flight\*\**  
Total additional cost: **€0.00**

**Total Cost: €167.43**



## BRUSSELS AIRLINES



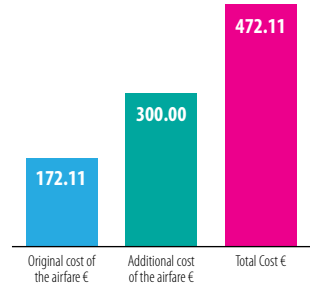
### Brussels to Hamburg

Original cost of the airfare: **€172.11**

Cost to use oxygen: €150 per bottle required

Total additional cost (minimum 2 bottles): = **€300.00**

**Total Cost: €472.11**



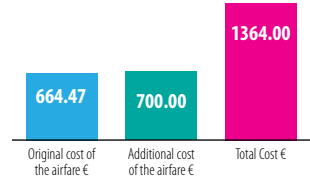
### Brussels to New York City

Original cost of airfare: **€664.47**

Cost to use oxygen: 350 EUR per bottle required

Total Additional (minimum 2 bottles) cost: **€700.00**

**Total Cost: €1364.47**



## KLM



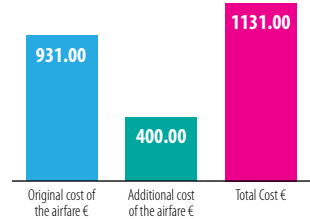
### Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur

Original cost of airfare: **€931.00**

Cost to use oxygen: €200 per flight

Total Additional cost: **€400**

**Total Cost: €1331.00**



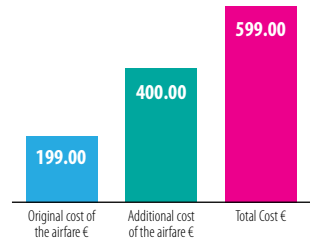
### Amsterdam to Zurich

Original cost of airfare: **€199**

Cost to use oxygen: €200 € per flight

Total Additional cost: **€400**

**Total Cost: €599.00**



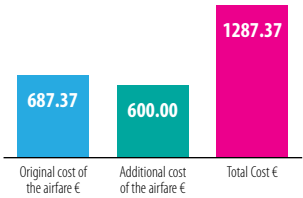
LUFTHANSA



Frankfurt to New York City

Original cost of airfare: **€687.37**  
Cost to use oxygen: €300 on demand (no limit) per flight  
Total additional cost: **€600.00**

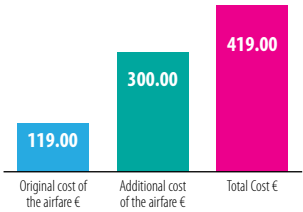
**Total Cost: €1287.37**



Munich to Istanbul

Original cost of airfare: **€119**  
Cost to use oxygen: €150 on demand (no limit) per flight  
Total additional cost: **€300**

**Total Cost: €419.00**



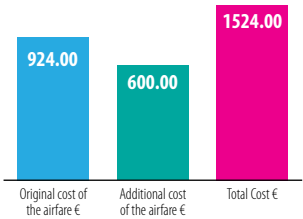
TAP



Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro

Original cost of airfare: **€924.00**  
Cost to use oxygen: €300 4L/min per bottle rate  
Total additional cost (minimum 2 bottles): **€600.00**

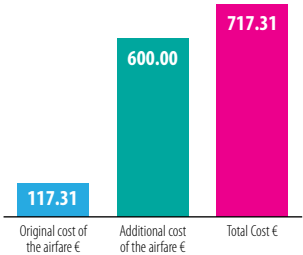
**Total Cost: €1524.00**



Lisbon to Brussels

Original cost of airfare: **€117.31**  
Cost to use oxygen: €300 4L/min per bottle rate  
Total additional cost (minimum 2 bottles): **€600.00**

**Total Cost: €717.31**







**EASA rules and regulations interpreted  
for patients and European airlines employees**

From February to April of 2013, the EFA Secretariat forwarded approximately 45 different questions in 11 different EU languages to the European Aviation Safety Authority (EASA) asking for clarification and information for patients in need of oxygen for travel. The answers provided by EASA were somewhat ambiguous or technical, and in this section of the booklet, we will share our interpretations of them as applicable to patients or staff of European airlines. Original replies can be sent to those interested upon request to confirm the accuracy of the information provided in this section.

Oxygen is a commodity defined as a 'hazardous material' or security and safety risk. Security implies, the protection of passengers against potential materials usable for a terrorist act, which necessitates regulations preventing the entry of certain items in the airplane to prevent them from being used as a bomb, for example. Safety would rather have to do with incidental risk for damage to other passengers or the airplane as such. Personal medical oxygen devices utilizing liquid oxygen are strictly prohibited from commercial aircraft as a carry-on baggage or checked baggage.

The most important relevant EU's regulations for travel, all European airlines, and for passengers using oxygen is Article 10 of regulations 1107/2006 (Section 4.3), 216/2008 and, most recently, 965/2012. These three regulations from 2006, 2008 and 2012 concern technical requirements and administrative procedures concerning air operations. Within the regulations, oxygen and bottles containing oxygen for medical use of no more than 5 kg, and never containing liquid oxygen, are allowed in checked and carry-on baggage or on the patient. The permission for this is subject to the prior approval of the airline concerned and notification of the pilot in command of a given flight about the quantity and location of oxygen on board the aircraft. The cylinders, valves and regulators must be protected from damage which could cause an inadvertent release of the contents.

Portable oxygen concentrators (POCs) are categorized as portable electronic devices containing lithium metal or lithium ion cells or batteries. Certain countries have specific requirements that forbid the use of these cylinders, which means an airline in that country would need to provide oxygen. As a result there are airlines which neither allow POCs on board their aircraft nor offer to provide oxygen to passengers. Where POCs are permitted for personal use, there is no need for prior approval of the airline but there is a limit on lithium content or Watt-hour rating of the batteries (which must comply with the United Nations Manual of Tests and Criteria – Part III, subsection 38.3).

Passengers requiring oxygen while travelling on planes will need to inform **the airline** in advance of their travels, typically at **a minimum** of 48 hours in advance, though this notification period will vary depending upon the airline. Not all European airlines employ doctors, so passengers are required to notify the airline first for guidance on the approval process for using oxygen in flight. The airline will either cater for passengers to use their own POC or require them to use oxygen provided by the airline. If personal POCs are accepted, approval of the oxygen cylinders will need to be approved by the airline or compared with a list of approved POCs available on their website.

No specific requirement exists in technical instructions regarding the use of oxygen on board aircrafts but specific procedures may be outlined in an airline's Operations Manual approved by their relevant National Authority. Ultimately, the National Authorities of Europe have differing positions on the use of oxygen on-board aircraft, like with POCs where European safety guidelines are not officially prohibiting their use. Passengers should locate applicable information on their relevant airline's policies and cabin crews should be well aware of what is permissible for the use of oxygen on-board according to their employer's Operations Manual. In this way, both passengers and cabin crews can avoid complications and be as informed as possible for voyages.



## Conclusions

As demonstrated by the information provided in this booklet, EFA is determined to push for change in the current situation, where European airlines clearly take advantage of their freedom to charge unjustifiably high fees for passengers travelling with oxygen. At the present, and in future, more patients requiring oxygen patients may wish to travel by air as their families spread out across the European continent and worldwide for work and education opportunities and as holiday destinations become more accessible and affordable. Denying them the right to travel for work, see their loved ones and travel for holidays as freely as other passenger based upon their need for oxygen therapy indicates the practice of discrimination. While certain airlines, such as British Airways and TAROM provide oxygen to their passengers with oxygen needs free of charge, other airlines like Air France charge flat fees for both European and long-haul flights. Such flat fees for short flights can result in an increase of airfares seven times the cost of the actual ticket.

Since many patients requiring oxygen in Europe are discouraged by the extortionate additional costs for travelling from many locations, it is necessary to at least present them with correct information and inform them adequately so they are aware of their options when travelling by plane. There is a need for transparent information to patients requiring oxygen therapy on the part of all airlines. While many already make the necessary information readily available to the public, other airlines choose to hide their additional fees for providing oxygen or make such information challenging to locate. The result of this is discouragement, is patients who may book their flight without having successfully found the information that they require prior to travel. Since Europe has an aging population more and more passengers will need oxygen on flights in the future, especially since chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a disease with an increasing prevalence in Europe. Airlines may overlook this group of customers if they are not reacting on the needs of this specific group of passengers. This also brings us to another major problem: the level of training for the aircraft staff regarding this specific need for the customers. As seen in the stories of passengers in this booklet, it is not uncommon for staff to have no or inadequate knowledge of their own airline regulations. This creates unnecessary additional stress for this group of passengers.

The example of wheelchair accessibility on airlines clearly indicates that the harmonisation of oxygen policies across Europe could be possible with a European Commission mandate. Either the free supply of oxygen by airlines or acceptance of POCs, if not both, should be required for each airline in Europe. EFA strongly encourages policymakers to follow-up on the Own Initiative Report on "The Rights of Europeans travelling by Air" submitted by MEP Keith Taylor and increase pressure on the European Commission to take action. The uniform adoption by all airlines for the provision of free oxygen and permission to use POCs for patients in need would be a significant step towards rectifying current problems and developing a best practice, not to mention reducing stress and improving quality of life for many people who need oxygen and wish to travel.

So, there is a need for the proper training of all airline cabin crews and staff for the handling of oxygen and care for the oxygen patients while they use the company's services. As a best practice, airlines should include hours in the training of cabin crews to inform them of their airline's unique policies for providing oxygen to passengers while dually assuring their knowledge of general rights of their passengers to the use of oxygen, specifically POCs, based on European regulation. The better training the airline employees receive, the better prepared they will be when alerted that passengers with oxygen needs will be on their flights.

The fact that official European regulations **do not** prohibit the use of portable oxygen concentrators on-board aircraft, but that some European **national** legislation do, creates a very difficult situation for passengers with oxygen needs, which in EFA's view is completely unacceptable. In essence, when booking their travels, passengers are required to depend on information provided by airlines as the sole reference point. As seen in this booklet, sometimes the information provided by airlines is not transparent enough about pricing in order for passengers to make travel reservations with confidence. While several airlines do provide transparent and clear information, unfortunately some other airlines do not have any transparency in disclosing relevant information for passengers. The immediate benefit to the harmonisation of oxygen regulations for European airlines would be the assurance to patients that **the same rules would apply no matter which airlines they choose including universal MEDIF forms to be valid for all airlines, as recommended by IATA.**

EFA hopes this booklet will be an additional reference point for passengers so they can quickly look up necessary steps when they would like to make their booking reservations with a European airline. The booklet clearly demonstrates the variability of airline policies and inflated costs imposed upon passengers requiring oxygen for travel.

## Index of Acronyms

<b>COPD</b>	– chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
<b>EASA</b>	– European Aviation Safety Authority
<b>EC</b>	– European Commission
<b>EFA</b>	– The European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations
<b>ELF</b>	– The European Lung Foundation
<b>EP</b>	– European Parliament
<b>EU</b>	– European Union
<b>FAA</b>	– Federal Aviation Administration (USA)
<b>IATA</b>	– International Air Travel Authority
<b>INCAD</b>	– Incapacitated Passengers Handling Advice
<b>MEDIF</b>	– Medical Information for Fitness to Travel or Special Assistance
<b>MEP</b>	– Member of European Parliament
<b>NGO</b>	– non-governmental organisation
<b>POC</b>	– Portable Oxygen Concentrator
<b>SAF</b>	– Special Assistance Form





Rue du Congrès 35  
1000 Brussels

T. +32 2 227 27 12  
info@efanet.org

**www.efanet.org**



*EFA is grateful to our sustainable partner AirLiquide and Almirall for supporting this project with an unrestricted educational grant.*

