



PEARLE

LIVE PERFORMANCE EUROPE



**TRAVELLING WITH MUSIC INSTRUMENTS
ON AIRPLANES
2014 UPDATE**

GUIDANCE FOR MUSICIANS AND TOURING MUSIC GROUPS

ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EUROPEAN AIRLINE COMPANIES

RELATED TO THE CARRYING OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS ON PLANES

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2012 the topic of travelling with music instruments on airplanes was brought to our attention. Touring orchestras, music ensembles, music groups and individual musicians reported regular difficulties when travelling with music instruments on airplanes.

An internal survey amongst members of Pearle* representing orchestras and music ensembles allowed us to identify particular issues arising when travelling by airplane, including differences between policies of airline companies. Simultaneously also the International Federations of Musicians (FIM) queried its affiliates.

Problems and complaints originate from the fact that policies of airlines operating in Europe are not harmonised, resulting in differences among conditions of carrying musical instruments on board or as luggage.

The hindrances and obstacles experienced relate to two main categories of complaints, **pricing** upon booking of a ticket **and handling** of the instrument at the airport and in the aircraft.

The survey also allowed us to collect some tips and tricks which we happily share with you. By and large, touring orchestras or other music groups, prepare the touring of their musicians in the greatest details and anticipate any difficulties that may arise. That does not mean that no problems occur when checking in, whilst being on tour or upon the return to the residence country. It's been observed that musicians who are travelling alone are more likely to be confronted with particular problems when travelling by airplane.

The first issue of this publication, coincided with an interesting initiative on the USA: on 6 February 2012 the Congress adopted specific provisions on travelling with music instruments in the United States' **FAA Air Transportation Modernization and Safety Improvement Act - SEC. 403 § 41724**, which therefore obliges airline companies operating in the USA to comply with those rules. This was the result of years of efforts by the music sector with American decision-makers.

On the other side of globe, the live performance sector in Australia first came to an agreement with Virgin Airlines¹ in 2011, which was then also picked up by Qantas² in February 2012, on travelling with music instruments by airplane in Australia. These arrangements both make domestic air travel for musicians in Australia much more affordable. The luggage pooling arrangements under both plans are particularly useful for touring bands, who can split their excess luggage arrangements amongst band members, to accommodate excess weight.

With these two large countries as an example, this sets a momentum to seek ways in which a better policy can be developed for musicians travelling with instruments. The European associations FIM (federation of musicians) and Pearle* (the federation of live performance organisations) pushed by the results achieved in overseas territories, decided to call for attention with the European institutions.

¹ <http://www.virginaustralia.com/au/en/about-us/legal-policies/conditions-of-carriage/>

² <http://www.qantas.com.au/travel/airlines/conditions-carriage-full/global/en>



In May 2012, Pearle* jointly with FIM sent to the Commission, DGs EMPL and EAC, an open letter addressing Musicians and their Employers' concerns about Travelling with musical instruments. Within this letter we considered the expected revision of Regulations on air passenger rights as the perfect occasion for the European Institutions to solve those problems.

In March 2013, the European Commission published a [proposal of Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council](#) amending two Regulations concerning Air Passengers' rights.

In the proposal for revision the Commission included a specific provision [art.6e](#) concerning the carrying of musical instrument on planes.

In February 2014, the European Parliament approved its position on the proposal and amended the mentioned article 6e adding a few improvements to the Commission text, such as the packaging of instruments and the labeling of their cases, to ensure that they are handled with the necessary care.

Whilst the European Parliament endorsed the Commission proposal to create a general framework for airline companies on the carrying of musical instruments on airplanes, the responsible ministers of Transport of the EU Member States react reluctantly towards the proposal.

Pearle* produced a briefing note containing a comparative analysis between the current airline policies on musical instruments and those presented in the 2012 guidance. The findings of this study prove that there are still main differences between airlines policies with regard to the carrying of musical instruments; moreover many airlines do not provide clear information which obviously leads to misunderstandings. Therefore the need of an EU-wide approach is still felt as a priority for the sector. The comparative analysis allows to explain and demonstrate to Member State representatives why the problems for travelling musicians remain an obstacle to free movement.

Meanwhile, as long as Europe has not a Europe-wide policy for travelling with music instruments, we invite you to further share this updated guide and its 'tips and tricks', and give us feedback on airline companies which you would label as music-friendly.



2. TIPS AND TRICKS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL TRAVELLING MUSICIAN

... to avoid unpleasant situations, stress, nervous breakdowns or long lasting frustration

Some general points of advice

- Rule 1** Under any circumstances: try to stay calm and respectful
- Rule 2** Be cooperative and solution-oriented
- Rule 3** Don't check-in last minute, but be well in advance at the airport
- Rule 4** Take a copy of the airline policy with you, especially when there is a mention on travelling with music instruments (see further in this document)
- Rule 5** Try to get on board of the aircraft as one of the first persons to have a choice of empty spaces in the overhead lockers to store your (small) instrument

Some specific points of advice

- Put your kit of reed knives (wooden) in your holdbag to avoid problems at the security check-in
- Beware of not holding new spare strings in your HAND LUGGAGE
- Take as a general principle that horn boxes do not fit in the overhead lockers

Travelling with a cello

- When booking online: book your cello, if no possibility available on the online tool, under 'Mr or Mrs Cello X' or alternatively contact directly the airline company
- Taking the cello on board: if the cello is to be taken on board, check the model of the aircraft, as it is easier for larger airplanes to store a cello on to the extra seat
- Put the cello end pin and new spare strings in your luggage which goes in the hold

Travelling with more than one instrument

- Warn the airline companies in advance of the number of instruments you are travelling with and that you plan to take on board
- If more than one extra seat is required, contact in advance the airline company so that this is included in your dossier
- When travelling in a group try to split the excessive luggage over the group members (attention : not all airline companies allow this – see description on next pages)

Insurance

- Insure your instruments for travelling. Specific insurances are available, both annual and temporary cover policy. You can insure even when the instrument is not your own.

Last but not least

- Check out our analysis of the airline company that you choose to travel with. Being prepared is much more comfortable.



3. GUIDELINES

The following guidance aims to help musicians who travel with their instruments by plane to have an overview of the terms and conditions of the main European airline companies about carrying musical instruments on planes. It concerns the analysis of the policy of fourteen European airline companies.

This guidance was first aimed at comparing the different rules related to this issue across the different airline companies. What occurred to us is mainly the lack of harmonization of these rules in Europe. This guidance is thus a tool to compare the different rules applied by the airline companies at a glance.

Regretfully none of the airline companies analyzed could be labeled as a music-friendly airline.

On the next pages you find per airline company the same set of parameters. As some companies have different conditions according to the class you are traveling with, we made the deliberate choice to compare only the conditions applied for economy class.

Some other conditions are varying according to the destinations and the duration of the flight. The information in the table therefore does not apply to all the destinations. We privileged the information concerning European destinations.

Analyzing the terms and conditions we focused on **five policy items** linked to the carrying of a musical instrument:

- 1) **HAND LUGGAGE**
- 2) **HOLD LUGGAGE**
- 3) **OVERWEIGHT or ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE**
- 4) **EXTRA SEAT**
- 5) **INSTRUMENT CASE**

How to read the tables ?

The table contains three categories:

1) **HAND LUGGAGE**

In this category you will find any relevant detail mentioned by the airline company related to the carrying of a musical instrument as a HAND LUGGAGE. When specific provisions were not mentioned, the general policy applicable is reported ("Item in general).

2) **HOLD LUGGAGE**

In this category you will find any relevant information about the conditions of carrying your instrument as a hold luggage: the maximum size and weight of your hold luggage and whether the hold luggage is allowed as part of your free allowance.

3) OVERWEIGHT or ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE

This section includes the conditions under which passenger can carry on board their overweight or additional luggage, including, when it is the case of, a musical instruments.

4) EXTRA SEAT

In this category, you will find out if it is possible to book an extra seat online or if it is necessary to call/ go at the agency. When available there is also mention of the maximum size and weight allowed for the extra seat. In addition to this you will find any relevant information provided by the airline company about the conditions and procedure to book an extra seat for your musical instrument. We also focused our analysis on the departure airport taxes, which may be charged to the passenger when booking an extra seat for the instrument;

5) INSTRUMENT CASE

This category concerns those provisions which some airlines policies specifically address to passengers travelling with musical instruments, regarding the packaging of their instruments.

The policies of about fourteen airline companies operating in Europe are included in our overview.

They are mostly chosen on the basis of the airline companies that were mostly quoted in our survey.

They are listed in an alphabetical order:

1. Airfrance
2. Alitalia
3. British Airways
4. Brussels airlines
5. Easyjet
6. Iberia
7. KLM
8. LOT
9. Lufthansa
10. Ryanair
11. SAS
12. Swiss airlines
13. TAP
14. Wizzair





3. LIST OF AIRLINE COMPANIES

1. Airfrance



		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Only some instruments (i.e. Violin, Mandolins, Banjo) Weight: Up to 12 kg ; Size: 55x35x25 <u>Free of Charge (part of the handbaggage)</u>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	23 kg <u>Free of Charge (part of the allowance)</u>
3	OVERWEIGHT	From 23 kg to 32 kg: extra fee Over 32 kg: Heavy Instruments allowed (exception)
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	Extra Fare
	AIRPORT TAXES	Not specified = YES
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	Prior Approval from the company
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Hard cases with round edges

To find more information:

<http://www.airfrance.co.uk/GB/en/common/voyage-en-avion/preparation-voyage/bagages-avion.htm>



2. Alitalia




		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	All Musical Instruments Size: 115 cm ; Weight: 8 kg <u>Free of Charge (part of the handbaggage)</u>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	All musical instruments Lenght: <u>from 115 up to 158 cm</u> Weight: up to 23 kg <u>Free of Charge (part of the allowance)</u>
3	OVERWEIGHT	From 23 up to 32 kg: extra fee
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Extra luggage purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	<u>Cello and similar instruments</u> Max dimensions (including the base): 52x40x135cm Extra fare
	AIRPORT TAXES	Not specified = almost yes
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	Notification to the Customer Service: 48 hrs before Check-in: 60 minutes in advance of the set time limit
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Special hard case

To find more information:

http://www.alitalia.com/gb_en/Informazioni-Supporto/Bagagli/index.html

3. British Airways

		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Small Musical Instruments Size: 56x45x25 ; Weight: up to 23 kg <u>Free of Charge (part of the handbaggage)</u> 
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	Musical Instruments Size: 90x75x43 ; Weight: 23 kg <u>Part of passengers' free checked baggage allowance</u> Double bass accepted even if it exceeds max dimension <u>(Excess baggage charge applies)</u>
3	OVERWEIGHT	Larger Instruments (If the company is notified 24 before the departure) Size: 190x75x65 cm ; Weight: from 23 up to 45 kg <u>Excess baggage charge applies</u>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	Purchasable, <u>depending on availability</u>
	AIRPORT TAXES	Not specified
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	NO online procedure ; YES by phone or through agent YES at the airport (no prior notification)
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Not specified

To find more information:

http://www.britishairways.com/en-gb/information/baggage-essentials?source=MNVINF3baggage_essentials&link=main_nav


Good Practice:

British Airways provides that: “Musical instruments shall be taken on board as part of your free hand baggage allowance providing they fit within the maximum bag dimensions Where possible, we'll also try and accommodate instruments that are slightly larger”.



4. Brussels Airlines



		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Small Musical Instruments provided they fit in the overhead compartment or under the seat in front of the owner <u>Free of Charge (part of the handbaggage)</u>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	Big Instruments (i.e. Contrabass) NO INFO – <u>Contact Service center</u>
3	OVERWEIGHT	Up to 32 kg <u>Excess baggage charge applies</u>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	Musical Instruments not fitting in the cabin require to purchase an extra seat
	AIRPORT TAXES	NO TAXES 
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	NO INFO – <u>Contact Service center</u>
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Not specified

To find more information:

<http://www.brusselsairlines.com/en-be/practical-information/travel-info/before-the-flight/luggage-info/default.aspx>


Good Practice:

The Brussels Airlines' policy is the only one (out of those analysed) that specifies in a clear way that: "for the extra seat you will be charged the fare excluding taxes".



5. Easyjet



		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	<p>Musical Instruments Subject to: Space availability in the overlocks and captain's discretion. Size: 30x120x38 <u>Free of Charge (part of the handbaggage)</u></p>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	<p>Larger instruments Weight: up to 32 kg (not included)</p>
3	OVERWEIGHT	<p>From 20 to 32 kg <u>Excess baggage charge applies</u></p>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	<p>Cellos require to purchase an extra seat Bigger instruments (i.e. double bass, harps)</p>
	AIRPORT TAXES	YES
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	Online or calling Customer Service Team 
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Not specified

To find more information:

<http://www.easyjet.com/en/planning/baggage>

6. Iberia






		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Musical Instruments Size: 30x120x38 cm <u>Free of Charge (part of the handbaggage)</u>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	Size: 190x75x65cm Weight: 23 kg <u>Free of charge (part of personal baggage allowance)</u>
3	OVERWEIGHT	From 23 to 32 kg <u>Excess baggage charge applies</u> From 32 to 45 kg <u>Considered as additional baggage - Charged</u>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	Contact Iberia Bookings Centre to check availability and dimensions
	AIRPORT TAXES	Not specified
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	Contact Iberia Bookings Centre
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Not specified

To find more information:

<http://www.iberia.com/be/baggage/>

7. KLM



		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Musical Instrument (i.e. Violin or Smaller) If it fits in the overlocked  <u>Free of charge (part of personal handbaggage allowance)</u>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	Size: 158 cm ; Weight: 23 kg  <u>Part of personal baggage allowance (Purchasable)</u>
3	OVERWEIGHT	W: from 23 to 32 kg <u>Excess baggage charge applies</u> More than 32 kg or more than 200 cm: <u>Prior approval and reservation via KLM Telephone Reservations</u>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	Larger Instruments  not fitting on the overhead compartment, nor under the seat
	AIRPORT TAXES	Not Specified
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	contact KLM Telephone Reservations, 48 hours in advance
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Properly packed in a Hard Case

To find more information:

http://www.klm.com/travel/be_en/prepare_for_travel/baggage/exceptional_baggage/index.htm#p3

Good Practice:

KLM's terms and conditions are the most transparent and which give clearer information (out of those analysed) concerning the travelling with musical instruments.



8. LOT

POLISH AIRLINES



		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Size: 55x40x23cm ; Weight: Up to 10 kg (Items in general)
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	Size: 158cm ; Weight: 23 kg (not included - purchasable) (Items in general)
3	OVERWEIGHT	contact Call Centre or LOT Offices
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	<u>If does not fit in the baggage limits</u> Musical Instruments are part of My Leisure Equipment Weight: 45 kg
4	EXTRA SEAT	Musical Instruments not suitable for transport in the hold compartment will be accepted in the cabin compartment <u>Only if due notice in advance and permission granted by carrier.</u> <u>Additional charge may have to be paid</u>
	AIRPORT TAXES	Not specified
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	<u>My Leisure Equipment</u> service on-line or LOT Call Centre not later than 24 hours before the departure
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	/

To find more information:

<http://www.lot.com/be/en/baggage>

9. Lufthansa




		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Size: 55x40x23cm ; Weight: 8 kg (Items in general)
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	Size: 158 cm ; Weight: 23 kg (Items in general)
3	OVERWEIGHT	Items of baggage that are larger or heavier or additional to the free baggage allowance <u>Excess baggage charges apply</u>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Special tariffs and conditions apply to the transportation of musical instruments .
4	EXTRA SEAT	Further information about these can be obtained from the <u>Lufthansa Service Team</u> .
	AIRPORT TAXES	
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	

To find more information:

<http://www.lufthansa.com/be/en/Baggage-overview>

10. Ryanair



		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Size: 55x40x20 ; Weight: 10 kg (Items in general)
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	Checked baggage allowance of 15 or 20 kg <u>Purchasable</u> (Items in general)
3	OVERWEIGHT	Over 20 kg <u>Excess baggage rate per kilo</u>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Large Musical Instruments (i.e. harps, drums, double bass) <u>in addition</u> to personal checked baggage allowance (up to 20 kg – <u>Purchasable online and at airport</u>)
4	EXTRA SEAT	Smaller Musical Instruments (i.e. guitar, violin, viola) (exceeding cabin baggage dimensions) require reservation in advance <u>Extra fare</u>
	AIRPORT TAXES	Yes
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	Online Surname: "ITEM SEAT" ; First: "EXTRA" 
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Not specified

To find more information:

<http://www.ryanair.com/en/need-to-know/>

11. SAS



Scandinavian Airlines

		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Musical Instrument Size: 55x40x23 ; Weight: 8 kg <u>Free of charge (part of personal baggage allowance)</u>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	1 Musical Instruments <u>Free of Charge (part of checked baggage allowance)</u>
3	OVERWEIGHT	Double Bass <u>If registered in booking, prior to departure</u>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	Cello (ONLY) <u>Extra seat Fare</u>
	AIRPORT TAXES	Not specified
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	SAS Customer Contact Center
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Hard case

To find more information:

<http://www.flysas.com/en/uk/travel-info/baggage/>

12. Swiss Airlines



		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Musical Instruments Size: 55x40x23 ; Weight: 8 kg <u>Free of charge (part of personal baggage allowance)</u>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	Musical Instruments exceeding hand baggage size and weight (if space not available in cabin) <u>Registered at booking time –</u> <u>Free of Charge (part of checked baggage allowance)</u>
3	OVERWEIGHT	Weight: up to 32 kg <u>Excess baggage rates</u>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	Musical Instruments exceeding hand baggage size and weight (if available space in cabin) <u>Extra fare</u>
	AIRPORT TAXES	Yes
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	Travel Agent ; SWISS point of sale / NOT Online
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Not specified

To find more information:

<http://www.swiss.com/nl/EN/prepare/baggage>

13. TAP



TAP PORTUGAL


		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	<p>Size: 115 cm ; Weight: 8 kg (Items in general) <u>Flexibility may apply depending on aircraft equipment and/or restrictive governments regulations</u></p>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	<p>Musical Instruments Size: 158 cm ; Weight: 23 kg <u>Free of Charge (part of checked baggage allowance)</u></p>
3	OVERWEIGHT	<p>Musical Instruments Size: 190x75x65 cm ; Weight: 32 kg <u>require notification at booking time (or 24hrs before departure)</u></p>
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Not specified
4	EXTRA SEAT	<p>Musical Instruments in cabin Weight: up to 84 kg <u>Extra fare</u> If heavier: More than 1 extra seat/fare</p>
	AIRPORT TAXES	Not specified
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	Prior to departure (not specified)
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	<p>Rigid and/or Hard shell container, specifically designed for shipping.</p> <p>Passanger is responsible for properly prepare a musical a musical instrument</p>

To find more information:

<http://www.flytap.com/Belgium/en/PlanBook/PrepareforTravel/luggage>

14. Wizzair



		2014
1	HAND LUGGAGE	Musical Instrument Size: 56x45x25 (80 cm of length); Weight: 10 kg <u>Free of Charge (part of checked baggage allowance)</u>
2	HOLD LUGGAGE	Musical Instrument larger than a cello (e.g. double bass, harp, etc.) must be checked in with a limited release tag <u>Purchasable</u>
3	OVERWEIGHT	Maximum weight 32 kg (included)
	ADDITIONAL LUGGAGE	Purchasable
4	EXTRA SEAT	Musical Instrument not fitting in the overhead compartment or under the seat (Prior approval to be obtained via WizzAir Call Center) <u>Extra Adult Fare</u>
	AIRPORT TAXES	Yes
	BOOKING PROCEDURE	Online First name: "EXST" ; Passenger's Surname 
5	INSTRUMENT CASE	Not specified

To find more information:

http://wizzair.com/en-GB/useful_information/baggage