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AEA ‘disappointed’ at European Parliament vote on passenger data transfer to US

Brussels - The Association of European Airlines expressed disappointment today as the European Parliament threw the issue of passenger information passed to US authorities back into the ring, by voting that the Commission’s finding that “the protection the passenger data receive in the US is adequate” to be unsatisfactory.

For almost two years, the airlines which fly between Europe and the USA have been caught between two conflicting sets of regulatory requirements – those of the US, demanding access to information contained in passengers’ computer reservations records, and those of the EU, requiring data-privacy rules to be observed.

Parliamentary resistance to a 2003 joint statement between the Commission and the USA prevented an early solution to the impasse, and the legal uncertainty it imposes on the airlines, and this latest move could further prolong the situation.

Said AEA Secretary General Ulrich Schulte-Strathaus: “Hopefully, the extreme closeness of the outcome – 229 out of 450 votes – is a signal that this is by no means a clear-cut issue, and the Commission will continue to negotiate constructively with the US to resolve this issue. The airlines need legal certainty; we also need recognition that this is a National Security issue, for which we should not be burdened with additional costs”.

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