

Packed with problems:

consumers call for free and fair hand luggage rules across Europe



Confusing rules, surprise fees, and a lack of transparency are turning hand luggage into a major pain point for Belgian, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese air travellers. Euroconsumers' latest survey reveals growing frustration and a clear demand for change: **passengers want consistent, fair, and transparent baggage policies — with hand luggage included as standard, not treated as a luxury.**



What really happens at the gate?

The survey shows just how frustrating hand luggage policies have become for travelers in the past two years:

- **32%** had their hand luggage sent to the hold due to lack of space in the cabin—without any fault of their own.
- **12%** were charged because a second item wasn't included in the ticket.
- **7%** paid fees because their luggage didn't meet size or weight requirements.
- **2%** reported that their hand luggage got lost.



Price Shock

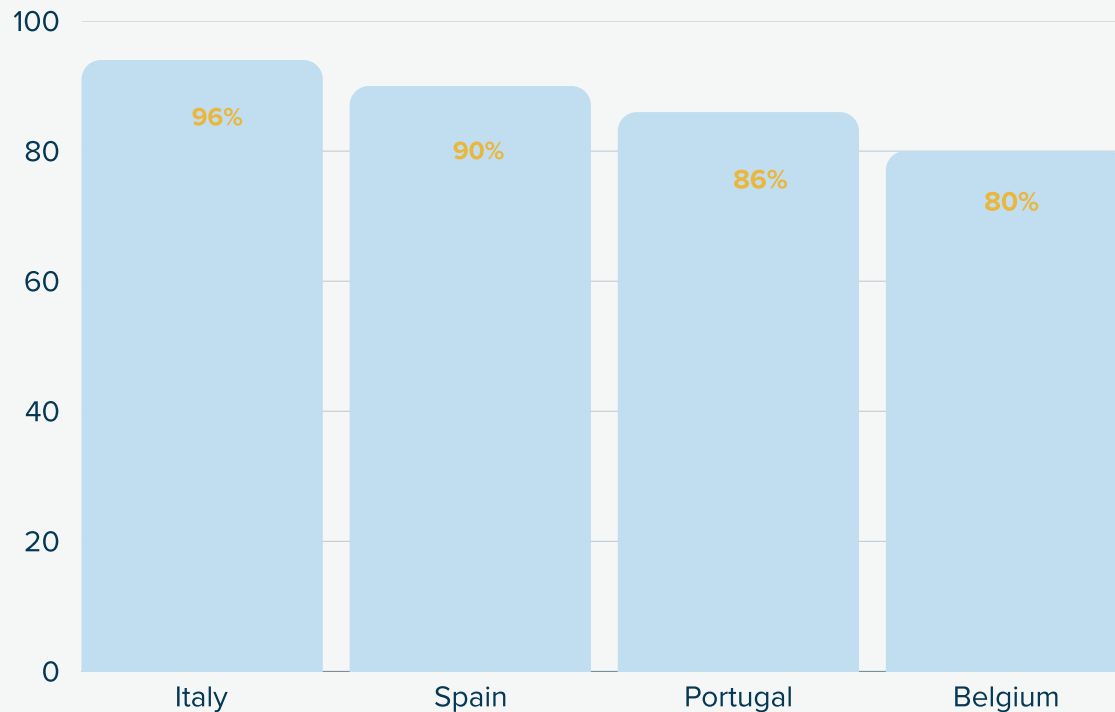


And these fees do not come cheap! The average cost for hand luggage is 49,4€.



Travellers are paying close attention

● Say they actively check what luggage is included when booking a ticket



Still, that doesn't mean the rules are easy to follow:

- **44%** don't believe **charging extra** helps reduce baggage in the cabin.
- **37%** say airlines **don't clearly communicate** hand luggage fees at the time of booking.
- **30%** think hand luggage rules in **general** are unclear.

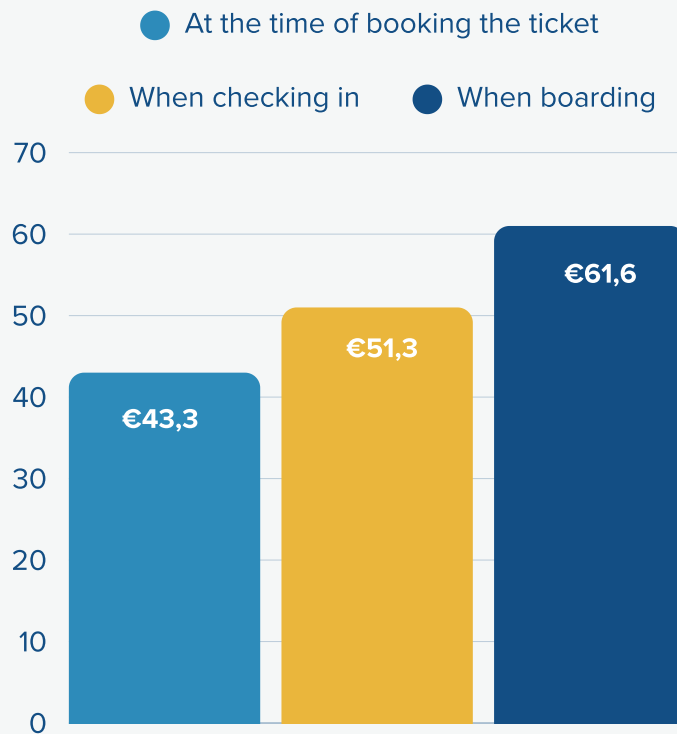
The real price of travelling: hand luggage fees take off before you do

Even before reaching the gate, hand luggage is already pushing up the price of flying. What used to be standard is now an added cost — **turning basic travel needs into expensive extras.**

These fees make it harder for passengers to compare offers from airlines. A ticket that looks cheap at first can end up costing much more once hand luggage is included, making price transparency a real challenge.

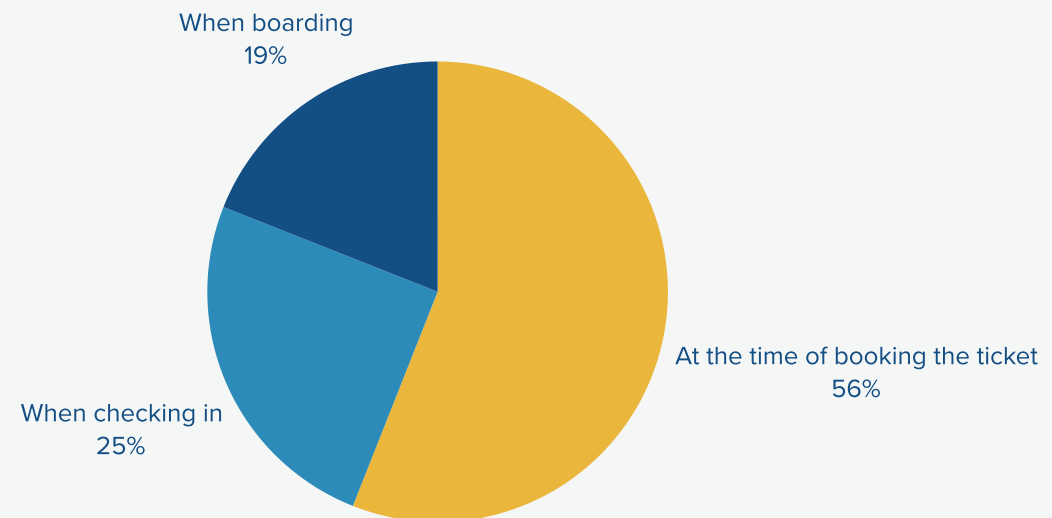
➔ **Instead of fair and clear pricing, consumers face rising costs as soon as they start booking.**

Average hand luggage fee



Where did you pay the hand luggage fee?

Where did you pay the hand luggage fee?



Baggage bottlenecks: cramped and confused

With many passengers forced to check in their hand luggage due to limited cabin space, nearly **6 in 10 travellers** believe airlines should provide more room for hand luggage onboard.

It's not just about tight spaces — when things go wrong with hand luggage, **1 in 2 passengers** don't even know how to file a complaint. **It's a clear sign that airlines are failing to inform and empower consumers.**

Consumers want fairness, not fees !!

Consumers across Belgium, Italy, Spain and Portugal have spoken loud and clear:

- **92%** want standardized rules across all airlines.
- **91%** call on EU authorities to intervene and create clear and unified policies.
- **90%** believe hand luggage should be included in the ticket price.
- **76%** support consumer organizations in taking a stand against airlines claiming hand luggage fees
- **73%** believe luggage fees are used to mislead passengers and boost profits.



Carry-on, not carry-cost: it's time for consumer-proof travels

At Euroconsumers, we believe **hand luggage is not a luxury — it's a necessity**. Every passenger should be able to carry a hand luggage onboard without having to decode complex rules or pay surprise fees at the gate.

We are calling on airlines, regulators, and the EU to act now for:

- ☒ Free hand luggage included in all ticket types.
- ☒ Clear, consistent rules across all airlines.
- ☒ EU-level enforcement of consumer rights.



Methodology

The survey was conducted simultaneously in Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and Spain between the 26th of June and the 2nd of July 2025. A total of 3.843 consumers aged between 25 to 79 years were surveyed. The results were weighted to reflect the distribution of the national population in each country, in terms of age, gender, region, and education level.

About Euroconsumers

Gathering five national consumer organisations and giving voice to a total of more than 6 million people in Italy, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Brazil, Euroconsumers is the world's leading consumer cluster in innovative information, personalised services and the defence of consumer rights. Our European member organisations are part of the umbrella network of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation. Together we advocate for EU policies that benefit consumers in their daily lives.