

Correspondence 3A.1 Meeting 78 – 21/03/2013



Ms. Niamh Maguire,
Secretariat,
Committee of Public Accounts,
Oireachtas Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

13th March 2013

Dear Ms. Maguire,



Thank you for your letter of 25th February with the following questions to the CAR:

- An explanation for why the consumer protection key performance indicators are below 100% in all areas.
- The consumer protection key performance indicator figures for the whole of 2012.

I apologise for the short delay in responding.

A complete set of nineteen key performance indicators for 2012 will be included in our 2012 Annual Report, which we expect to send to the Minister for Transport later this month for publication thereafter.

The consumer protection figures for 2012 are presented in the table below. As the table contains more recent information than was available at the time of our January meeting with the PAC, some of the numbers are slightly different to the information previously supplied.

Consumer protection KPIs	2012	2011
Review complaints within 1 week	82%	65%
Complete investigations within 3 months*	78%	31%
Complete investigations within 7 months*	88%	50%
Inspect airports	8	9

*The KPI figures are lagged, to allow performance to be measured over subsequent months; 2011 numbers cover the January-July period, and 2012 numbers cover August 2011–June 2012.

As regards the CAR not generally reaching 100% in our KPIs, I should first say that we seek to strike a balance between setting a target that 'stretches' the CAR to give a good service to the public while also respecting feasibility limits arising from the resources available to the office. (Arguably, targets for which the outcomes are routinely 100% need to be re-set at a higher level.)

Second, as explained in my letter of 7th February last, the CAR's performance in investigating passenger complaints in 2011 was affected by a significant spike in passenger queries in mid-to-late 2010 and early 2011. It would have been open to the CAR, when we began to observe the increase in complaints following the ash cloud and other airspace disruptions, to seek additional resources and staff to maintain service levels. In the current economic climate, we did not do so, giving priority to reducing expenditure. It still seems to me that this was the correct decision.

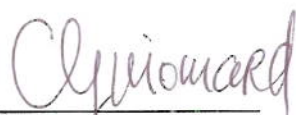
Some of our investigations of passenger complaints in 2011 and 2012 were also delayed while legal appeals were considered by the European Court of Justice. The ECJ made its ruling in October of last year and we are now close to concluding the last few of these cases.

The time required to carry out an investigation also depends up the response of airlines. The majority of airlines now cooperate fully during the complaint handling process such that only complex cases or cases contingent on pending case-law are protracted.

As the table shows, the CAR's performance in dealing with passenger complaints improved very markedly in 2012, when three-quarters of investigations were completed within 3 months.

I trust that this information meets the requirements of the Committee. The CAR remains available to respond to any other queries that you may have, now or in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C. Guiomard', written over a horizontal line.

Cathal Guiomard
Commissioner