



POLICY BRIEF



The standard information form for
package travel contracts from a
BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS
perspective

Measures For Better Consumer Information

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Republic of Austria
Social Affairs, Health, Care
and Consumer Protection

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Introduction

This policy briefⁱ analyses the ‘**standard information form**’ for **package travel contracts** in line with the EU directive 2015/2302 from a behavioural economics perspective. The EU directive requires travel service providers to provide their customers with certain **relevant information** (travellers' rights regarding the travel service, the total price, cancellation conditions etc.) and a standard information form summarising the consumers’ most important rights prior to booking a packageⁱⁱ. The goal of the directive is to ensure a high, uniform level of consumer protection. In this report, we discuss how this standard information form should ideally be designed as well as how and where it should be provided in the booking process to encourage customers **to notice, read and most importantly understand** the relevant information.



To achieve this goal:

1.

We first present insights from the **behavioural economics literature** on the perception and processing of information to gather insights regarding the optimal presentation of information.

2.

We then analyse how the EU directive is currently implemented by travel service providers. This includes conducting a **case study** using examples from the booking process of **20 travel service providers** active in German-speaking countries. This analysis allows us to identify room for improvement which can be addressed.

3.

In the last step, which is informed by the previous analysis, we suggest **specific measures** derived from the behavioural economics literature **to improve the design and positioning** of the standard information form in the booking process in order to improve consumer understanding and hence welfare.

RELEVANCE OF BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS

Behavioural economics aims to **understand how individuals make decisions**, both consciously and unconsciously. Contrary to the standard economics perspective, behavioural economics does not assume individuals to act fully rationally all the time. In contrast, **it considers cognitive, emotional, social, and situational factors which can influence decisions**. Humans are often subject to biases and limited mental capacity, influencing which and how information is processed. Behavioural economics analyses which factors influence and drive decisions and develops appropriate measures **to support individuals in making informed decisions**. Thus, the perspective of behavioural economics is highly relevant in the context of the standard information form to encourage customers to read and to help them comprehend the provided information. The behavioural economics literature provides several relevant insights regarding the **presentation and positioning of information**. Based on the extant literature, we have developed proposals on how information should be presented to increase information perception, processing and understanding.



ⁱ This policy brief is based on an extensive research report provided by the IHS for the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (“Das Pauschalreise-Standardinformationsblatt aus verhaltensökonomischer Sicht. Maßnahmen für eine bessere Verbraucherinformation“). The full report is available in the [institutional repository at IHS](#) (in German).

ⁱⁱ The directive refers to package travel, package holidays and package tours as ‘packages.’

I. Review of the relevant behavioural economics literature

The insights presented below stem mostly from the general consumer choice literature, i.e., in the context of general terms and conditions. We describe evidence-based measures which influence whether people choose to open, read, and understand relevant information.

PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION

We identify three main approaches to direct consumers' attention to specific information, convince them of the relevance of this information, and encourage them to read it instead of ignoring it.

1 The first approach is to **emphasise the benefit** of reading the information, showing that it will outweigh the associated costs like the time and effort required to read it. This can, for instance, be achieved by:

- referring to **(emergency) situations** where the information from the form will be needed^{1,2}
- emphasising **how little time it takes** to read the information (e.g., “reading this form only takes 3 minutes on average”)^{3,4}

2 The second approach is to portray information as **personally relevant** to the consumers to increase the likelihood of reading the information. For example, personal relevance can be increased by:

- addressing individuals **by their name**^{5,6,7}, directly addressing a **specific target group**^{8,9}, or formulating a **call to action**¹⁰
- communicating **social norms**^{11,12,13}
- suggesting **scarcity and urgency**^{3,14} (i.e., informing customers that this is their last chance to read the information increases the likelihood of accessing the information)
- providing a **trustworthy messenger** presenting the information⁴

3 Once customers are willing to access the provided information, the third approach is to **facilitate reading and comprehension**.

The literature suggests several possibilities to avoid information overload, for example by:

- **simplifying information**^{4,16,17} (i.e., by shortening information, using simple, short phrases, and avoiding technical terminology)
- improving the **formatting and structure** to make information clearer and facilitate processing^{18,16} (i.e., using subheadings to enhance understanding)
- **highlighting** the most relevant information and/or listing it first or last to increase the likelihood of perceiving and remembering¹⁹
- using **formatting** to emphasise important aspects^{18,16} (i.e., by using frames, bold print, larger fonts, or colours)
- **using visuals**^{20,21,3,22} (i.e., icons or pictures) to reduce cognitive effort and support text comprehension by making the structure of the text more easily accessible



When confronted with too much input, it becomes difficult to filter the most relevant information and **‘information overload’** can occur when the amount of information exceeds mental capacities. This can cause individuals to ignore information if it is not **salient** (i.e., presented prominently, meaning that it stands out and is easily accessible).¹⁵

POSITIONING OF INFORMATION

Not only the presentation but also the positioning of information is crucial to ensure that it is perceived and processed by consumers. Information is often provided through a hyperlink in the booking process, leading to a PDF document containing the information. If this link is positioned together with several other links, **the first and last links** are more likely to be clicked on than the links in the middle.²³ Furthermore, it is preferable to **link directly to the information** rather than linking to a webpage that again links to the information.¹⁰ Another sensible approach is to provide (a summary of) **the information directly on the screen** which reduces the effort of accessing it – compared to following a link. This measure has been shown to increase the likelihood of reading information.^{24,4,3,25}



The special case of booking holidays

There are several specifics in the context of booking a travel package compared to other purchases. Booking a holiday can be considered a **more infrequent decision** with higher financial and emotional risk.²⁶ Considering the **relatively high cost**, it can be assumed that the motivation to make a good decision is high and individuals are willing to invest time and effort.¹⁹ However, due to a large number of alternatives, **mental capacities might already be exhausted when individuals complete the booking** process, thus hindering the comprehension of the standard information form.²⁷ Furthermore, individuals might be subject to **optimism bias**²⁸, **underestimating the probability of negative events**, and might thus underestimate the relevance of the standard information form.



Online versus offline booking



There are several obvious differences when comparing online and offline booking of a package. These differences should be considered as they affect the provision and perception of information. Online booking simplifies the consumers' search for and booking of a holiday. **Comparing offers and ratings** is facilitated online.^{29,19} However, **the online context lacks a trustworthy contact person** in case of ambiguities, emphasising the importance of providing information in a simple and clear way for the online booking context. Additionally, the large number of alternatives offered online can be **overwhelming** and lead to **information overload**.³⁰ Offline, travel agents can support customers in filtering the best alternatives. Further, **scarcity and urgency** are often communicated to enhance online bookings, creating additional stress.³¹ However, this pressure could also occur offline in the presence of a travel agent. Online, consumers can more easily browse through options and **defer the final decision**.³¹ Offline, the booking might be completed more quickly, as deferral could be more difficult at a travel agency. Generally, information is processed differently on a screen than in print. **On a screen, individuals tend to skim the text and focus on visual elements**, causing more superficial processing.^{32,33} Again, this emphasises the **importance of clearly communicating information online** since consumers tend to be **particularly vulnerable** in this context.

II. Analysis of current implementation



Following the insights provided by the behavioural economics literature, we analyse the content of the EU directive, as well as current implementations by travel service providers from a behavioural economics perspective. Based on this case study, we make suggestions on how the presentation and positioning of information could be improved.

A. Requirements for the standard information form according to the EU directive

The [EU directive 2015/2302](#) specifies that before booking a package, customers must be informed about relevant information and provided with the standard information form. Templates for the standard information form for different distribution types are provided. These templates comprise a **framed information box** containing important details and some more **specific information about the travellers' rights organised with indents** below the box. The directive does not provide additional specifications regarding the presentation of information in and positioning of the standard information form. The directive specifies, though, that the content has to be conveyed in a clear, understandable, explicit and – if provided in writing – legible way.



Analysing the templates from a behavioural economics perspective, **the framed information box is useful** as it places the most important information at the top. Other positive aspects include that the **templates provide specific guidance** on which content to present and which formulations to use as well as the usage of indents to structure the information.



However, the **personal relevance** of the provided information for consumers is **not apparent** due to the text's **formal and abstract language** and the scarce use of concrete examples. Phrases are generally long, with **no use of subheadings**, hindering comprehension.

There are **few specifications** regarding **the presentation of information and the positioning of** the standard information form. As a result, the EU directive is interpreted in different ways by travel companies. Therefore, the legally required provision of the standardised information is implemented differently – both concerning the design and positioning of information, in turn affecting consumers' awareness and comprehension.


B. Current implementation concerning presentation and positioning

To understand the current implementation, we analysed 20 standard information form implementation examples of travel service providers for package travel based on the German-speaking market.


PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION

- The **title** of the standard information form is not specified by the regulation. Very generic titles, using complicated language can limit the perceived relevance of the information. However, titles containing the name of the travel service provider are evaluated positively.
- Regarding the formatting of the standard information form, putting **a frame** around the information and **placing it at the top** of the standard information form can be considered favourable, as this enhances the salience of the content. However, the uniform font size and colour throughout the standard information form templates make it difficult to visually determine the most important information.
- Most companies use **indents or bullet points**, which is evaluated positively. However, the information should be systematically structured, e.g., by using visual aids like icons or clearly separated sections.
- The standard information form sometimes spans **more than one page**, which can render it less clear and lead to **information overload**. Overall, improvements to the presentation would be possible, in particular regarding the title and formatting of the information.


POSITIONING OF INFORMATION

 1. Most travel service providers include a hyperlink in the booking process that leads consumers to the standard information form (which is then provided as a PDF). We analysed the **hypertext of these hyperlinks** (i.e., the text displayed). In practice, various implementations can be observed as the content of the hypertext is not regulated. A consistent wording, which in some cases is not even ensured within the homepage of a single service provider, would be preferable to enhance the consumers' understanding.

- The observed hypertexts are generally **long and neutral**, and in many cases do **not have any meaning for customers**.
- Hyperlinks are often embedded in **long phrases**, adding complexity. Customers are **rarely addressed directly**. There are some positive examples of hypertext addressing customers directly (“my rights”), communicating relevance and benefit. The phrase **“additional information” suggests optionality** and does not clearly communicate that customers should look at the information. A positive aspect is that hyperlinks usually have a different font colour, which supports salience.

 2. The second component that was analysed was **how the standard information form can be accessed**. In most cases, the hyperlink leads directly to the PDF of the standard information form, which is evaluated positively from a behavioural economics perspective.

- An **indirect link** leading to a webpage where the standard information form is, again, hyperlinked among other information is discouraged, as it entails an **additional effort for consumers**.
- Further, the standard information form is **not always provided as a PDF**. This should ideally be prevented, as the provision through a PDF is assessed positively because this makes it easy for customers to save the standard information form for later.
- Regarding the position of the link, most companies place it towards the end of the booking process together with other terms and conditions. **Without prioritisation**, several hyperlinks provided at the same time can easily cause **information overload and cause customers to “click-through”** the website.
- In some positive examples, the information box of the standard information form is provided directly in the booking process with a link to the full standard information form.

 3. The third component of the analysis looked at **how travel service providers ask their customers whether they have read and understood their rights**. Note that this is not required in the directive and could even be viewed critically from a consumer protection perspective if customers confirm something that is not the case. Nonetheless, many travel service providers ask their customers to confirm that they have taken note of their rights. In the booking process, customers are usually made aware of the content of the standard information form **at the same time when they are asked for confirmation**.

- The hyperlink to the standard information form is often presented **together with other hyperlinks**, like terms and conditions, that most customers usually just **accept without contemplation**. Out of habit, customers might be inclined to copy that behaviour and simply confirm that they have read their rights in the standard information form even if that is not the case.
- From a behavioural economics perspective, it can nonetheless make sense to ask for confirmation – as this gives customers an incentive to pause and consider reading the standard

information form. **Having to actively tick a box** is assessed positively, as customers are required to actively provide their confirmation. This is already implemented by many companies and has the potential to increase engagement with the information.

III. Proposed measures



Based on the literature review and the analysis in the case study, we suggest concrete measures to **improve the presentation and positioning of information** in the context of the standard information form. The goal of these measures is that consumers more often access the standard information form and that they read and comprehend its content.

A. DESIGN OF THE STANDARD INFORMATION FORM

There are several approaches to increase the probability that information will be read and understood by adapting the design and presentation of content on the standard information form. Suggestions are made regarding the title, presentation, and wording of the content as well as the design and formatting of the standard information form.



THE TITLE OF THE STANDARD INFORMATION FORM

- The title should emphasise the **personal relevance** to customers and clearly communicate the content of the standard information form.
- **Consistent naming** and **concise language** focusing on the relevant information is beneficial, compared to long and technical phrases, which should be avoided.
- Personal relevance can be increased by **addressing customers directly**, for example using phrases such as "your/my rights" or **calls to action**. Mentioning the **name of the travel service provider** can also convey personal relevance.



THE CONTENT OF THE STANDARD INFORMATION FORM

- The content should equally emphasise the **personal relevance** and be formulated as comprehensible as possible – wording should be **simple and non-technical**, irrelevant information should be avoided.
- More **complex terms could be explained using examples**.
- Further, **subheadings** are suggested to emphasise personal relevance within the text, for example, "This applies to you in case of an emergency" or by **using a question** that directly addresses the customer. Subheadings should clearly communicate the content of the respective paragraph.
- Using **trustworthy messengers** (e.g., a consumer protection authority logo or the logo of the European Commission) might also be a possibility to emphasise personal relevance.



THE FORMATTING OF THE STANDARD INFORMATION FORM

- The text should **not exceed one A4 page** to prevent information overload.
- Using **single columns** for text is recommended as this makes the processing of the text easier. Information should be **clustered by topics**, which are **separated structurally and supported by icons** to enhance clarity and structure.
- The most important information should be **placed at the top of the page** and salience can be enhanced by using **bold font, different font sizes, colours, and frames** to aid identification of relevant information.



Example of a redesigned standard information form

The previous analysis shows that behavioural insights provide possibilities to improve the requirements of the directive regarding the standard information form and its implementation. The following example shows what a version of the exemplary presentation of the standard information form could look like when following good practices from the behavioural economics literature (figure on the right). Note that the example provided below does not comprise all the behavioural principles presented above, in particular, the specific formulations need to be fine-tuned and optimised regarding their comprehensibility in cooperation between legal and behavioural experts. The figure predominantly serves to demonstrate the graphical representation of the standard information form compared to the current version of the standard information form following the directive (figure on the left).

Figure 1

<p>Standard information form for package travel contracts where the use of hyperlinks is possible</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>The combination of travel services offered to you is a package within the meaning of Directive (EU) 2015/2302. Therefore, you will benefit from all EU rights applying to packages. Company XY/companies XY will be fully responsible for the proper performance of the package as a whole.</p> <p>Additionally, as required by law, company XY/companies XY has/have protection in place to refund your payments and, where transport is included in the package, to ensure your repatriation in the event that it becomes/they become insolvent.</p> <p>More information on key rights under Directive (EU) 2015/2302 (to be provided in the form of a hyperlink).</p> </div> <p>Following the hyperlink the traveller will receive the following information:</p> <p>Key rights under Directive (EU) 2015/2302</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Travellers will receive all essential information about the package before concluding the package travel contract. — There is always at least one trader who is liable for the proper performance of all the travel services included in the contract. — Travellers are given an emergency telephone number or details of a contact point where they can get in touch with the organiser or the travel agent. — Travellers may transfer the package to another person, on reasonable notice and possibly subject to additional costs. — The price of the package may only be increased if specific costs rise (for instance, fuel prices) and if expressly provided for in the contract, and in any event not later than 20 days before the start of the package. If the price increase exceeds 8 % of the price of the package, the traveller may terminate the contract. If the organiser reserves the right to a price increase, the traveller has a right to a price reduction if there is a decrease in the relevant costs. — Travellers may terminate the contract without paying any termination fee and get a full refund of any payments if any of the essential elements of the package, other than the price, are changed significantly. If before the start of the package the trader responsible for the package cancels the package, travellers are entitled to a refund and compensation where appropriate. — Travellers may terminate the contract without paying any termination fee before the start of the package in the event of exceptional circumstances, for instance if there are serious security problems at the destination which are likely to affect the package. — Additionally, travellers may at any time before the start of the package terminate the contract in return for an appropriate and justifiable termination fee. — If, after the start of the package, significant elements of the package cannot be provided as agreed, suitable alternative arrangements will have to be offered to the traveller at no extra cost. Travellers may terminate the contract without paying any termination fee, where services are not performed in accordance with the contract and this substantially affects the performance of the package and the organiser fails to remedy the problem. — Travellers are also entitled to a price reduction and/or compensation for damages where the travel services are not performed or are improperly performed. — The organiser has to provide assistance if the traveller is in difficulty. — If the organiser or, in some Member States, the retailer becomes insolvent, payments will be refunded. If the organiser or, where applicable, the retailer becomes insolvent after the start of the package and if transport is included in the package, repatriation of the travellers is secured. XY has taken out insolvency protection with YZ (the entity in charge of the insolvency protection, e.g. a guarantee fund or an insurance company). Travellers may contact this entity or, where applicable, the competent authority (contact details, including name, geographical address, email and telephone number) if services are denied because of XY's insolvency. <p>Directive (EU) 2015/2302 as transposed into national law (hyperlink)</p>	<div style="text-align: right;"> </div> <p>Your most important rights regarding your package travel with „XY“ <small>In accordance with Directive (EU) 2015/2302</small></p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Your booking is a package travel*</p> <p>Therefore, you will benefit from all EU rights applying to package travel. „XY“ is fully responsible for the proper performance of the package as a whole and has protection in place to refund your payments in case of insolvency.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What does this mean for you?</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>✗ How you can terminate the contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are entitled to terminate the contract without paying a termination fee and can get a full refund if one of the essential elements (other than the price) of the package have changed significantly (e.g., <i>Your flight departure is postponed for one day</i>) • If, after the start of the package, significant elements of the package cannot be provided as agreed, suitable, alternative arrangements will have to be offered to you at no extra cost. You may also terminate the contract without paying a termination fee, where services are not performed in accordance with the contract, and if the organiser fails to remedy the problem. • You are entitled to terminate the package travel contract without paying any termination fee in the event of unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances e.g., serious security problems, which are likely to affect the package. You can also terminate the package travel contract at any time before the start of the package in return for payment of an appropriate and justifiable termination fee. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>👤 How you can transfer your contract to another person:</p> <p>You can transfer your package (with reasonable notice) to another person, but this might incur additional costs.</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>€ How your expenses can change:</p> <p>The price of the package may only be increased if specific costs rise (for instance fuel prices), and if expressly provided for in the contract, and in any event not later than 20 days before the start of the package. If the price increase exceeds 8% of the price of the package, you may terminate the contract. If the organiser reserves the right to a price increase, you have a right to a price reduction if there is a decrease in the relevant costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are also entitled to a price reduction and/or compensation for damages where the travel services are not performed or are improperly performed. <p>If, before the start of the package, the service provider responsible for the package cancels the package, you are entitled to a refund and compensation where appropriate.</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>🚒 This applies to you in case of an emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are given an emergency telephone number or details of a contact point where you can get in touch with the organiser or the travel agent. • The organiser will provide assistance if you encounter difficulties. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px;"> <p>🏠 You are protected in case of insolvency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the organiser (or in some member states) the retailer becomes insolvent payments will be refunded. If the organiser or, where applicable, the retailer becomes insolvent after the start of the package and if the transport is included in the package, repatriation of the travellers is secured. </div> <p><small>*In accordance with Directive (EU) 2015/2302</small> <small>reference to regional arbitration board</small></p>
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B. POSITIONING OF THE STANDARD INFORMATION FORM

First, it is necessary to convince customers to actually click on the hyperlink to access the standard information form, most importantly this can be done by communicating the benefit of reading it. To increase the perceived relevance and benefit, it is important to communicate a clear call to action, telling customers what they should do and providing reasons why they should open the standard information form.



! Statements that could be used to ‘promote’ the hyperlink to the form

- **Directly address customers**

“Do you know how you could cancel your booking? You can find this and further information in the standard information form.”
- **Communicate benefit**

“Please read the standard information form to receive information about your rights for this booking, e.g., cancellation conditions.”
- **Address optimism biasⁱⁱⁱ** by reminding customers that emergencies can occur and emphasising the benefit of knowing the standard information form in this case.
- **Communicate scarcity and urgency**

“This is your last chance to see your rights for your package travel contract before the booking is completed.”
- **Present social norms^{iv}** and communicate information about normal or appropriate behaviour

“More than 90% of Austrian customers who have booked a package found the standard information form to be useful.”
- **Recalibrate the perception of costs (i.e., with reading cues)^v**

“Reading this standard information sheet takes on average 3 minutes”
- **Address cognitive load and completion bias**

“You are almost done! Just read through your most important rights and then book your holiday!”

Some of these suggestions could be combined to direct customers to the standard information form. However, one should be **careful that the statement is not too long or complex**. Understanding which of the listed approaches is most effective cannot be determined solely based on the literature and should be evaluated empirically, e.g., by testing different messages against each other in a randomised controlled trial.

➔ Measures to **simplify the access to the form**

- the hyperlink/hypertext should suggest **relevance**, be **short** and **precise**.
- It is important to present the link in a **separate line** and to avoid it being hidden between other information.
- Despite already being implemented by most companies, it would be beneficial to make a **direct link to the standard information form mandatory**.

ⁱⁱⁱ Note that while it is important to alert customers to the importance of the form particularly for emergencies, it is not appropriate to alarm them.

^{iv} Note that here it is essential to be transparent and base these statements on real data, for example from a survey.






^v Note that if the time to read is perceived as too long, this could have adverse effects.


Example for a summary of the most important information

If it is sufficient that customers read only a **summary of the most important content** (and save the standard-information-form-PDF for later), it could be helpful to provide a summary of the most important points **using icons or questions directly in the booking process** while still providing a link to the full PDF of the standard information form. We suggest how such a summary of the most important aspects to be displayed in the booking process could look like in figure 2.

Figure 2

Summary of your rights concerning the package travel operated by XY

- 
Will I incur any unexpected costs?
 ✓ A cost increase (by maximum 8%) is possible under certain contractual conditions (e.g., in case of an increase in fuel costs).
- 
Can I withdraw from my contract?
 ✓ Yes, in general by paying a fee. However, in the event of extraordinary circumstances at the destination or if substantial changes to the travel services occur the withdrawal is free of charge.
- 
Can I transfer my contract to another person?
 ✓ Yes, you can transfer your contract (please note deadlines and possible additional costs).
- 
What happens if I have an emergency on the trip?
 ✓ In case of an emergency, you will be given an emergency telephone number and your tour operator will provide assistance.
- 
What happens in case of insolvency of the tour operator?
 ✓ In the event of insolvency, you are fully protected (repayment and repatriation guaranteed).

 For further information, please click [here](#).

We recommend requiring customers to **confirm that they have read and understood** the content of the standard information form – as this provides an incentive for customers to pause and consider reading the standard information form. To reduce the probability that customers just confirm without actually having read their rights, we strongly recommend **highlighting which confirmations are mandatory and which are optional** (like subscribing to a newsletter). It would be beneficial to ask customers for confirmation separately from the terms and conditions. Regarding the design of the confirmation, **using a box that needs to be ticked** is the preferred implementation. Further, the box should be un-ticked by default, to require an **active confirmation** from customers by ticking the box. However, ticking a box still does not guarantee that customers click the hyperlink and read the provided standard information form. Therefore, it could be helpful to **provide the summary of the most important content** (see figure 2) directly before customers have to confirm that they have read and understood the content of the standard information form.

Measures for the offline context

Lastly, we discuss several measures in the context of offline bookings. It should be considered, however, that these measures could potentially be difficult to implement as part of a regulation. To counteract the digital reading gap, the standard information form should be **provided in print** as the default. This provides the additional benefit that customers can **take the document home**. Similarly, a **summary** like in figure 2 should be provided in print. Additionally, the standard information form should by default be **sent to customers per email**, so that it is accessible to them digitally. Travel agents could be provided with several suggestions on how to **encourage customers to read the standard information form**. To prevent time pressure while reading the standard information form, travel agents could by default **provide the estimated time it takes to read the document**. Alternatively, travel agents could be required to **go through** the standard information form **together with customers** and highlight the most important aspects.

IV. Conclusion



In this report, we have developed a series of measures to improve the likelihood that customers booking a package notice, read and comprehend the information on the standard information form. These measures are based on insights from the behavioural economics literature as well as on a case study investigating the implementation of several companies. Many of these measures would be straightforward to **implement in the directive**, e.g., using the exemplary presentation of the standard information form in *figure 1* as an example in the annexe of the directive. For other measures like the messages to convey relevance and a personal benefit, it might only be possible to **implement them as suggestions or best practice examples**.



Overall, it can be concluded that most travel service providers analysed in the case study take the requirements of the directive seriously. Yet, from the behavioural economics perspective, there is still **room for improvement**. On the one hand, the requirements of the directive could be optimised, but also travel service providers could use the leeway provided by the directive more in the interest of better consumer information. Suggestions for improvement concern the **design of the standard information form** itself, but also **the way customers are guided through the process**. Ultimately, it might not be a requirement that customers read and understand the standard information form immediately during the booking process. Instead, it could be a good compromise that customers are provided with a summary of the most important content of the standard information form (see *Figure 2*) and **a hint to save the standard information form** (which should for this purpose ideally be provided as a PDF) for later in case of emergency.

Overall, some of the measures suggested in this report might sound trivial or obvious – however, the fact that many simple principles on how information should be presented or structured are considered neither in the directive nor in the implementation of travel service providers highlights some of the challenges in the implementation of the directive. Lastly, it should be emphasised that the question of whether the measures will turn out effective in practice is an empirical one. There are many indications that the suggested measures will improve consumer information. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of measures as well as specific details of their design should ideally be answered in further studies using **experimental approaches** and **randomised controlled trials**.

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Review

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Title

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