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## **New rules end confiscation of duty-free liquids bought at Singapore airport from transfer passengers**

***Today, the European Commission adopted a regulation allowing air passengers arriving from Singapore and transferring at an EU airport to take duty-free liquids on-board their connecting flights. When changing planes in the EU, these passengers will no longer be obliged to abandon liquids bought at Singapore airport and carried in their cabin baggage. This is the first application of a recent regulation that introduced the possibility of such exemptions for liquids bought in the airports of third countries.***

*'This is an important step in reducing the burden of security on air passengers. It will save transfer passengers from Singapore a lot of inconvenience without compromising security. The Commission was able to grant this exemption for liquids bought at Singapore airport because the national authorities have demonstrated that their security measures were as good as ours. We hope that today's decision will encourage other countries to do the same, and so have a snowball effect',* said Jacques Barrot Vice-President of the Commission responsible for transport.

In response to the serious threat posed by liquid explosives to air transport, in October 2006 the Commission adopted a regulation prohibiting passengers from carrying more than small amounts of liquids past screening points and on-board aircraft. This has had an unfortunate side effect. Arriving passengers are prohibited from taking liquids bought in third country airports into the cabin of connecting flights when they change planes at an EU airport; rather they have to leave them behind. This annoys passengers and complicates screening.

To tackle this problem, last July the Commission adopted a regulation which allows exemptions from the prohibition for liquids bought in the airports of a third country. Such exemptions are conditional on the third country complying with EU equivalent security requirements. The Commission has to verify whether security standards in the third country are satisfactory and, when they are, can grant an exemption. These exemptions are thus granted on a country-by-country basis.

Earlier this year, Singapore requested an exemption from the prohibition on taking liquids on-board aircraft for those bought at Singapore airport. The Commission verified security standards at that airport and found them satisfactory. It then adopted this regulation granting an exemption for liquids bought at Singapore airport, with the consent of the Member States and after scrutiny by the European Parliament.

Other countries have asked the Commission for similar exemptions and are preparing reports showing that they apply the relevant security standards, which are now awaited. The Commission hopes that, with the active co-operation of the countries concerned, it will be able to exempt from the prohibition on carrying liquids on-board connecting flights those liquids bought at their airports.