On 9\textsuperscript{th} December the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) published guidance which expands to all phases of flight the possibility to use personal electronic devices (PED) such as tablets, smartphones, e-readers and MP3 players. The devices will have to remain in ‘Flight Mode’ or ‘Airplane Mode’ and transmitting capabilities will have to be disabled.

It will be to the discretion of each airline to use this guidance and change its policy. In this case, the airline will have to inform the aviation authority of the country in which it is registered.

\textit{The same day (9\textsuperscript{th} December) the European Commission issued the following statement:}

\textbf{Aviation: EU extends the use of electronic devices on planes}

The EU’s Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has today (9\textsuperscript{th} December) updated its guidance on the use of portable electronic devices on board (PED), including smartphones, tablets and e-readers. It confirms that these devices may be kept switched on in "Flight Mode" (non-transmitting mode) throughout the journey (including taxiing, take-off and landing) without a risk to safety. EU Transport Commissioner, Vice President Siim Kallas has asked EASA to accelerate its safety review of the use of electronic devices on board in transmitting mode, with new guidance expected to be published early in 2014.

"We all like to stay connected while we are travelling, but safety is the key word here. I have asked for a review based on a clear principle: if it's not safe it should not be allowed, but if it is safe, it can be used within the rules. Today we are taking a first step to safely expand the use of in-flight electronics during taxiing, take-off and landing. Next we want to look at how to connect to the network while on board. The review will take time and it must be evidence-led. We expect to issue new EU guidance on the use of transmitting devices on board EU carriers within the next year."

\textbf{The new guidance}

The updated safety guidance published today refers to portable electronic devices (PED) used in non-transmitting mode, better known as "flight mode". It allows, for the first time, the use of personal electronic devices in flight mode in all phases of the journey, from gate to gate.

Prior to this all personal electronic devices had to be completely turned off during taxiing, take-off and landing.

\textbf{The next steps – blue tooth, wi-fi, mobile phones}

EU Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas has asked the EU's Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to accelerate the review of the safe use of transmitting devices on board - with new guidance to be published in the coming months.
In general, airlines do not currently allow phone or wi-fi connection from the time the aircraft doors have closed until the aircraft has arrived at the gate and the doors are open again.

Connecting to the network is today only possible in specially equipped aircraft that are able to connect you with a network (this can be permitted at cruising altitude). In those cases, a passenger does not connect to the ground network, but to a safety certified on-board system. There are only few aircraft equipped at the moment but we may expect this to expand in the coming years. Where aircraft are equipped to provide this service, the Commission has recently taken telecoms decisions to enable the provision of 3G and 4G to provide better connections for transmitting devices.

**What does this all mean for my next flight?**

It is up to every airline to update their operating rules now. Many are expected to do so in the coming weeks. In any event, passengers must always follow the safety instructions of the crew, so you must only use your electronic devices if the crew allow you to do so. Crew will in any case still require your attention during the safety briefing and they may ask you to stow away heavy items during take-off and landing.

When may I use my smartphone, tablet, e-reader or music player?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flight mode &quot;on&quot;</th>
<th>Flight mode &quot;off&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the ground (taxiing)</td>
<td>YES, but do pay attention to the safety briefing and stow away heavy items before take-off</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-off</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruising</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES but only in specially equipped aircraft and when crew allows it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landing</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>