

EU follows US in allowing portable electronics in-flight

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A woman watches a video on an iPhone as her plane lands at Denver International Airport in Denver, Colorado on October 23, 2012

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) said Wednesday it will allow passengers to use a range of mobile electronic devices in flight with very few restrictions.

Just two weeks after the Federal Aviation Administration in the United

States said it would similarly relax its rules, EASA said that [personal electronic devices](#) such as tablets, smartphones, e-readers and mp3 players could be used in all phases of flight in the near future.

The devices must, however, be used only when the "flight mode" or "airplane mode" is switched on, it added in a statement. That mode disables cellular service, so passengers will still not be able to make phone calls.

Current EASA guidance allows the use of personal electronic devices on aircraft except during taxiing, take-off and landing.

EASA would issue the new guidance "by the end of November" and the changes would apply to aircraft operated by European airlines.

"This is a major step in the process of expanding the freedom to use personal electronic devices on-board aircraft without compromise in safety," said EASA executive director Patrick Ky.

EASA said that in the long term it is looking at new ways to certify the use of mobile phones on-board aircraft to make [phone calls](#).

"EASA recognises the wide proliferation of personal electronic devices and the wish of the travelling public to use them everywhere," it said.

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