



Huge repatriation effort after Thomas Cook bankruptcy

September 24, 2019

Thomas Cook goes out of business leaving hundreds of thousands of holidaymakers stranded.



The largest peacetime repatriation effort in British history.

Hundreds of thousands of holiday-makers are stranded around the world, after travel firm **Thomas Cook** went under.

SOUNDBITE (English) BRITISH PASSENGER, FIRST NAME NOT GIVEN, SURNAME GOWER, SAYING:

"They just told us to go to the Iberia desk and we should get more information from there. We're not to sure at this stage."

The head of the British aviation authority says they're working with the government to bring 150,000 people back to the U.K.

(SOUNDBITE) (English) CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY DIRECTOR TIM JOHNSON SAYING:

"The Civil Aviation Authority is focused on bringing back people to the UK, that's what our role is. In other countries in Europe the regulator and the governments will be responsible for the arrangements in their areas."

Thomas Cook runs hotels, resorts and airlines for 19 million people across 16 countries. And with 600,00 people currently abroad, a huge rescue operation is needed.

The firm had been struggling with 1.7 billion pounds worth of debt.

Chief Executive Peter Fankhauser said it was a matter of profound regret that the company had gone out of business.

In a statement released early Monday he said "I would like to apologize to our millions of customers, and thousands of employees, suppliers and partners who have supported us for many years."

The demise of Thomas Cook marks the end of one of Britain's oldest companies.

It started running in 1841 pioneering railway tours and package holidays, and survived two world wars.

Now, hundreds of thousands of people are due to return from Thomas Cook holidays for the last time.