

Main OTAs against the Lufthansa Distribution Cost Charge that will be introduced from 1st September

Online Travel Agents (OTAs), e-Travel, Etraveli, Lastminute.com Group, Travelgenio, Travelplanet, Travix, Unister Travel Group and eDreams ODIGEO have written to the Chief Executive Officer of Lufthansa AG to jointly express their concerns in relation to the announcement made by the Lufthansa Group that Lufthansa Group airlines (which includes Lufthansa, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines and Swiss International Airlines) will introduce, as from 1 September 2015, a new cost surcharge of € 16 for every ticket issued by travel agents via a GDS. The OTAs consider this move to be a direct attack on their business model which will substantially increase their costs and create inefficiencies, ultimately to the detriment of consumers and to the airline industry as a whole.

The OTAs' position is that the Lufthansa surcharge is manifestly illegal. In the first instance, the surcharge breaches the non-discrimination rules that apply to a parent carrier under the CRS Code of Conduct adopted at EU level (Regulation 80/2009). The surcharge also constitutes a clear infringement of EU competition law, both under Articles 101 and 102 TFEU and equivalent provisions under national competition laws. Apart from the abusive nature of the practice, there is also evidence of a price fixing conspiracy among the airlines to impose a surcharge on OTAs. Finally, the surcharge amounts to a breach of national commercial agency laws and unfair trade practices laws.

Lufthansa Airlines is the largest airline in Europe, both in terms of overall passengers carried and fleet size when combined with its subsidiaries. As such, the actions of Lufthansa have a very significant impact on the industry and consumers. The OTAs involved in this initiative jointly sell at least 25 million flight tickets per annum online, of which, they estimate, approximately 4 million Lufthansa Group tickets.

If Lufthansa does not abandon the announced surcharge, the OTAs will consider further action necessary to prevent the introduction of the surcharge.

PRESS CONTACT:

Vicky Jiménez
vjimenezgil@iniciativasvirtuales.com
Grupo Iniciativas Virtuales
www.iniciativasvirtuales.com
Tlf: +34 91 186.32.55
Tlf Móvil: +34 668.83.64.65