

**Question for written answer E-003122/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Anneleen Van Bossuyt (ECR)

Subject: Concentration on the online travel metasearch market

Online travel metasearch engines such as trivago, Kayak and TripAdvisor are believed to offer consumers greater choice when booking hotels or flights by aggregating fares from a variety of different online travel agents (OTAs). In reality, however, these metasearch engines create an illusion of choice for consumers owing to the increasingly concentrated European OTA market, dominated by Expedia and Booking.com-owner The Priceline Group, and the interwoven relationships between metasearch engines and OTAs: trivago is owned by Expedia and Kayak by The Priceline Group. Furthermore, each OTA is the leading advertiser on the other's metasearch engine, which precludes a truly competitive market since OTAs and metasearch engines act as both competitor and customer to the other.

Given the growing role of metasearch engines in the online travel sector, can the Commission confirm what steps it is taking to ensure a truly level and competitive playing field for metasearch engines, OTAs and hotel websites in the online travel booking sector?