

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1569/09  
by Ignasi Guardans Cambó (ALDE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Abuse and lack of transparency in surcharges applied by airlines

Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008<sup>1</sup> of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community lays down that optional price supplements must always be communicated in a transparent and unambiguous way, and their acceptance by the customer must be on an 'opt-in' basis.

Airlines have been including taxes in their special offers and promotions for several months now, but they do not provide information on their mandatory surcharges for credit card payments or for management and reservation charges. Furthermore, some options, such as travel insurance or other additional charges that increase the final cost, are now flagged by default in the online purchase process, instead of being on an 'opt-in basis' (Article 23). This is a misleading system that may well confuse the consumer and increase the final price of the ticket.

The information consumers receive on prices should be as transparent as possible. To achieve this, what measures does the Commission intend instituting to stop European airlines employing abusive surcharging practices like those described?

Does the Commission think that European consumers should pay airline surcharges when it is the consumers themselves who make their own bookings and pay with their cards, this being the only way tickets can be purchased in e-commerce?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 293, 31.10.2008, p. 3.