

WRITTEN QUESTION P-5901/08
by Stanisław Jałowiecki (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Commission notice on the definition of 'parent carrier'

On 4 September 2008 the European Parliament adopted at first reading the Code of Conduct for computerised reservation systems (CRSs). A debate whose main focus was the definition of 'parent carrier' was held the day before the vote. There was particular controversy over the provision indicating that a parent carrier could be an airline exercising a 'decisive influence' over CRS management. There was much confusion as to how 'decisive influence' should be interpreted; in particular, there was no clear answer to the question of whether three airlines which have a combined holding of 48% in the European airline ticket reservation system Amadeus meet the parent carrier criteria. During the vote, the definition of 'parent carrier' was adopted by a very small majority (305 to 291 – a difference of 14 votes).

Commissioner Peter Mandelson, who represented the Commission during the debate, gave an undertaking that, in the framework of the compromise reached, the Commission would issue a formal notice clearly explaining the meaning of the definition of 'parent carrier'.

Given the above, would the Commission state:

1. when it will issue the notice interpreting the definition of 'parent carrier';
2. whether the airlines Air France, Lufthansa and Iberia are carriers exercising a 'decisive influence' and, on that basis, are parent carriers?

A swift and detailed reply would be greatly appreciated, since there have already been reports from the market indicating that those three airlines do not consider themselves subject to the obligations incumbent on parent carriers.