

Consumers: Commissioner Kuneva welcomes new report on airline charges in Oslo

EU Consumer Commissioner Meglena Kuneva is in Oslo today for the presentation of a new report on obligatory airline charges for consumers. The report, which will be presented by the Norwegian Ombudsman Bjørn Erik Thon, is the result of a year long investigation by 11 national enforcement authorities (led by Norway). The in-depth study found that airlines are frequently including parts of their basic operational costs (handling charges, fuel charges, booking fees) into what appears to be obligatory "taxes and charges" – this can mislead consumers and falsely attract consumers to buying seemingly cheaper tickets. It is also clear that the current plethora of terminology used to describe different TFCs (taxes, fees, and charges) makes it extremely difficult for consumers to compare offers, and in particular to distinguish the value of the government taxes and airport charges they are entitled to claim as a refund if they do not use their ticket. The study covered 281 flights, 24 leading European airlines, as well as 34 major European airports. The results of the investigation will feed into the industry agreement currently being elaborated following the EU enforcement sweep on airline ticket selling websites (see IP/09/783), as well as into an action plan by the CPC network of 30 enforcement authorities to tackle the specific problems identified.

For more information, see:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/index_en.htm