

# Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of Momondo by Priceline

Priceline operates online travel agents and travel comparison metasearch sites, under several brand names including booking.com, priceline.com, agoda.com, KAYAK Rentalcars.com and Opentable. Momondo Group is primarily active in the operation of metasearch sites, under the brands Cheapflights and Momondo. The Commission assessed the impact of the proposed transaction on markets for the operation of metasearch sites in the European Economic Area (EEA). Metasearch sites, on the one hand allow travellers to search for and compare travel products. On the other, they offer advertising services to online travel agents and travel service providers, such as airlines, hotel operators, and car rental companies. The Commission also examined a number of vertical relationships arising from the merging companies' activities in the operation of metasearch sites and their activities in operating online travel agents downstream.

The Commission's investigation found that:

- The companies' metasearch activities are largely geographically complementary in the EEA, as Priceline has limited activities in the Nordic countries, where Momondo has a strong market position. Conversely, in countries like Germany and Austria, Priceline's brands have a stronger market position and Momondo is weaker. Therefore, the strengthening of the merged entity's market position in EEA markets will be limited.
- The merged entity will be competing with several other global meta search operators, such as Skyscanner, Trivago, TripAdvisor, Google (through Google Hotels and Google flights), as well as by operators of smaller, regional or national, meta search sites.

The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns on any of the markets examined.

## **Companies and products**

**Priceline Group** of the US supplies services in 224 countries and territories in Europe, North America, South America, the Asia-Pacific region, Middle East and Africa.

**Momondo Group** of the UK provides services in the online travel sector in 35 international markets with a focus on the Nordic region.

## **Merger control rules and procedures**

The transaction was notified to the Commission on 12 June 2017.

The Commission has the duty to assess mergers and acquisitions involving companies with a turnover above certain thresholds (see Article 1 of the [Merger Regulation](#)) and to prevent concentrations that would significantly

impede effective competition in the EEA or any substantial part of it.

The vast majority of notified mergers do not pose competition problems and are cleared after a routine review. From the moment a transaction is notified, the Commission generally has a total of 25 working days to decide whether to grant approval (Phase I) or to start an in-depth investigation (Phase II).

A non-confidential version of today's decision will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8416](#).