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Press release

eu travel tech commends European Commission's Renfe decision, highlights need for systemic solution

Brussels, 17 January 2024 – Today's decision by the European Commission accepting legally binding commitments by Renfe to supply its content and real-time data to third-party ticket platform is a welcome development.

Mirroring the landmark [decision](#) by the German Competition Authority against Deutsche Bahn, the Commission establishes that third party ticketing platforms are competitors of the state-run rail operator's own ticketing channels and must be allowed to compete fairly. The [decision](#) marks a milestone in the treatment of anti-competitive practices by large rail operators against third-party platforms seeking to distribute their tickets. Such practices constitute an abuse of the market power of these railways, limiting consumer transparency and choice to protect the strong position of incumbents. The European Commission's investigation of Renfe and the resulting commitments will serve as an important example for how to remedy this problem and make rail services more widely available and competitive.

While the commitments are unfortunately not as comprehensive as the [decision](#) against Deutsche Bahn, notably missing elements around compensation, they do bring crucial obligations for Renfe to make its tickets available for distribution. However, without effective antitrust enforcement on commissions, the business models of mobility platforms cannot function in effective competition with Renfe.

The Commission's decision reflects the broader relevance of 'content access' issues in the distribution of transport tickets; an issue which also sits at the heart of the ongoing [investigation](#) of the Italian Competition Authority against Ryanair.

With encouraging actions taken by competition regulators across Europe to curb anti-competitive ticketing practices by large transport operators, it will be crucial for policymakers to design a systemic solution at the EU level. The upcoming EU Regulation on Multimodal Digital Mobility Services (MDMS), is the key opportunity to open the distribution of transport tickets, thereby making traveler's lives easier and their choices greener.

"Today's decision by the Commission is an important milestone towards rendering rail tickets widely searchable and bookable across the EU. Renfe's commitments show that a systemic solution is needed to ensure that tickets of important operators can be distributed widely, in alignment with other landmark cases (such as the German case against Deutsche Bahn) and the ongoing investigation into Ryanair's abusive behavior in Italy. We call on EU policymakers to closely consider these insights and tackle problematic practices of incumbent operators via the upcoming Regulation on Multimodal Digital Mobility Services (MDMS)", said Emmanuel Mounier, Secretary General of eu travel tech.

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eu travel tech

About eu travel tech

eu travel tech represents the interests of travel technology companies. eu travel tech uses its position at the centre of the travel and tourism sector to promote a consumer-driven, innovative and competitive industry that is transparent and sustainable. Our membership spans Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), Online Travel Agencies (OTA), Travel Management Companies in business travel (TMCs) and metasearch sites. For more information on eu travel tech and our policy priorities, please visit www.eutraveltch.eu

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