

Duff on Hospitality Law

OTA & Travel Distribution Update: Danish competition authorities weigh in on OTAs; the politics of distribution; Triptease expands its offerings

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The week's Update features an update on one of the many pending EU and EU member states' ongoing investigations into the practices of OTAs. Enjoy.

Danish Competition Authorities Weigh In

("Hotel-booking competition improving but users must be better-informed, Danish report says," MLex, February 1, 2019) (subscription required)

In a report released last week by the Danish competition authority, the regulator concluded that although competition among bookings channels has improved (allegedly as a result of the rate parity improvements associated with "narrow parity"), much education is still needed. According to the regulator, both consumers and smaller hotel companies need a far better understanding of OTAs' revised terms and conditions and their effects. Going forward, the regulator will now focus on better educating hotel companies of the revised terms and conditions and informing consumers of OTAs' standard sales practices (e.g., limited room availability). Separately, the Danish government has committed to working with the EU to require OTAs to better inform consumers of the OTAs' preferential sort order and display practices.

The Politics of Distribution

("Amnesty urges digital tourism sites to end listings in Israeli settlements," The Washington Post – World News, January 30, 2019)

Rarely does distribution get dragged so publicly into global politics. This past week, however, Amnesty International issued a controversial [report](#) (combined with public demonstrations) criticizing Booking.com,

Expedia, TripAdvisor and Airbnb for featuring Israeli accommodations, restaurants and other travel services in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. According to the report, the platforms' practices have the effect of "normalizing" the ongoing Israeli occupation. The report also commended Airbnb for its decision last November to delist properties in the occupied West Bank, which decision has engendered a backlash here in the United States, including lawsuits by Israeli supporters and legislation aimed at penalizing the company (and others like it) for participating in Israeli boycotts. Not surprisingly, the report and associated protests were met with sharp criticism by Israeli leaders and supporters.

Triptease Expands Its Offerings

("Triptease shifts to full-service platform to drive direct bookings," Phocus Wire, January 30, 2019)

Developer of the widely adopted (and sometimes controversial) price comparison widget, Triptease, announced plans to introduce a wider suite of services to better drive direct bookings, including a guest intelligence tool to identify and monitor highly valued guests across their entire booking journey.

Other news:

Klook and Rail Europe sign global partnership to target modern travelers

MarketWatch – All Company Press Releases News & Commentary, January 30, 2019

Klook, a world leading travel activities and services booking platform, and Rail Europe, the leading distributor of European rail products representing over 50 railroads throughout Europe, are pleased to announce a game-changing global partnership. Marking an important milestone for Klook, the strategic partnership will augment the platform's rail offerings and provide travelers with all-encompassing travel in-destination services. At the same time, Rail Europe may now leverage Klook's cutting-edge mobile booking technology to connect with modern, tech-savvy travelers in more than 100 markets around the world.

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