

NOTAT

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/Susanne Richter

Flight carrier Ryanair reported to the police for misleading marketing practices

In May 2009, Ryanair advertised flight tickets at DKK 79 in a Danish newspaper without giving correct information about the handling fee that could be added to the price. That is contrary to the Danish Marketing Practices Act, says the Danish Consumer Ombudsman, who now reports Ryanair to the police.

A number of flight tickets at DKK 79 marketed by Ryanair in May last year could become substantially more expensive than first advertised. To get the ticket at DKK 79, the consumer had to pay by Visa Electron. If other cards like Mastercard or Visa/Dankort were used for payment, a handling fee of DKK 40 per traveller was added.

So if one adult purchased a return ticket from Billund to Birmingham and paid by Visa/Dankort, the ticket did not cost 2 x DKK 79 or a total of DKK 158, but rather 2 x DKK 79 + 2 x DKK 40, equalling a total of DKK 238.

In the Consumer Ombudsman's opinion, this is a misleading marketing practice contrary to section 3 of the Danish Marketing Practices Act.

- 'When the price of a product or a service presupposes payment with a specific, particular payment card, it must appear from the marketing communication. The fee for the use of other payment cards, including the more common Visa/Dankort, must also be announced so that the offer becomes transparent to the consumer. That is why I have now reported Ryanair for misleading marketing practices,' says the Consumer Ombudsman, Henrik Øe.

The police will now investigate the case, and once the investigation is completed, an employee of the Consumer Ombudsman will appear in court on behalf of the Prosecution Service.

The advertisement for which Ryanair is being reported to the police was brought in the daily newspaper *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten* in May 2009 and marketed a number of flight tickets for travels in June and July.

Ryanair has previously been a subject of interest to the Consumer Ombudsman. In 2007, the Consumer Ombudsman thus submitted a request to the Irish authorities for enforcement under the special EU rules because the company's price information on its website did not accord with Danish law or Irish law.

See the press release (in Danish) from the Consumer Ombudsman about this at: <http://www.forbrugerombudsmanden.dk/Nyheder-fra-FO/Pressemeddelelser/airsweep08>

Moreover, in recent years the Consumer Ombudsman has regularly focused on the airlines' marketing of flight tickets. Most recently as the co-author of an EU report which proposes simplification of the price information of airlines.

See the press release (in Danish) from the Consumer Ombudsman about this at: <http://www.forbrugerombudsmanden.dk/Nyheder-fra-FO/Pressemeddelelser/Ny-rapport-foreslaar-forenkling-af-flyelskabernes-prisoplysninger>

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For further information please contact:

Susanne Richter
Head of section with the Consumer Ombudsman
Tel. +45 32 66 92 76