



News Release

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CC CLEARS THOMAS COOK/CO-OP TRAVEL AGENCY JOINT VENTURE

The Competition Commission (CC) has formally cleared the anticipated travel business joint venture between Thomas Cook, the Co-operative Group (Co-op) and the Midlands Co-operative Society (Midlands).

This confirms the [provisional findings which were published last month](#). In its [final report](#) published today, the CC has concluded that the acquisition will not result in a substantial lessening of competition in any markets in the UK, in particular for customers buying package holidays from high street travel agents. Therefore, customers are unlikely to suffer from significantly higher prices or reduced choice as a result of the joint venture.

The joint venture would bring together two of the three largest travel agents on the UK high street. Thomas Cook currently has 780 stores, Co-op 360 and Midlands 100. Thomas Cook will continue to conduct its tour operator business separately from the joint venture.

The CC did extend the deadline for the inquiry last month in case the time required to consider any comments received in response to the provisional findings report took it past the original deadline of August 16th – however responses to the provisional findings were received well before the end of the consultation period and it has now published the final report within the original timescale.

Notes for editors

1. The CC is an independent public body, which carries out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries.
2. The Enterprise Act 2002 empowers the Office of Fair Trading to refer to the CC completed or proposed mergers for investigation and report which create or enhance a 25 per cent share of supply in the UK (or a substantial part thereof) or where the UK turnover associated with the enterprise being acquired is over £70 million.
3. The members of the Thomas Cook/Co-op Inquiry Group were: Laura Carstensen (CC Deputy Chairman and Chairman of the Inquiry Group), Professor John Cubbin, Roger Finbow, Professor Robin Mason and Jonathan Whiticar.
4. Further information on this inquiry, including the terms of reference and other key documents, as well as on the CC and its procedures, including its policy on the

provision of information and the disclosure of evidence, can be obtained from the CC website at www.competition-commission.org.uk.

5. Enquiries should be directed to [Siobhan Allen](#) or [Rory Taylor](#) by telephoning 020 7271 0242.