

# 15 October 2008: Anticompetitive agreement between taxi operators in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence département

Published on October 22, 2008

---

**The Conseil de la concurrence sanctions a taxi association and some of its members for colluding to prevent new taxis from setting up in the département**

> [Version française](#) 

The Conseil has handed down a decision, penalizing the *Syndicat d'artisans et entrepreneurs de taxis des Alpes-de-Haute-Provence* (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence Taxi Operators and Drivers Association) and a number of local taxi firms, for engaging in an anticompetitive agreement. The offending parties were found to have prevented new taxis from setting up in *the département*, thereby reserving the lucrative market for transporting medical patients (known in French as "*malade assis*") for taxis already in place.

The *Conseil* imposed fines totalling around €40,000 and ordered a summary of its decision to be published in several regional or professional media.

**The taxi business centred on transporting medical patients is particularly attractive in rural areas**

In the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence *département* of south-eastern France, as in many other rural areas, the taxi business has a peculiarity that sets it apart from that practised in major towns and cities: it mainly (over 80%) consists of long-distance transportation of medical patients.

This type of long-distance transport, which is reimbursed by French social security, is more lucrative than standard short trips and explains the 44% rise in

the number of taxi licences issued in this *département* between 2000 and 2007.

### **The offending parties intentionally saturated waiting lists for obtaining taxi licences to prevent competing taxi operators from entering the market**

In France, taxi drivers are required to hold a licence or "parking permit", usually issued by the mayor or the prefect. Licences are issued on a first come first serve basis, according to the applicant's place in the waiting list.

Between 2004 and 2008, the *Syndicat des artisans et des entrepreneurs de taxis des Alpes-de-Haute-Provence*, together with five of its members, deliberately abused the rules governing the profession by submitting licence applications in the 200 municipalities of the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence *département*. They had no intention of actually obtaining the licences, but acted solely to saturate the waiting lists. In doing so, they prevented competitors from gaining access to these local markets.

### **The Conseil takes the view that these practices are serious and merit proportionate sanctions**

Given the seriousness of the practices observed and the situation of the association and the companies concerned, the Conseil imposed the following fines:

- Syndicat des artisans et entrepreneurs de taxis des Alpes-de-Haute-Provence: 3,000 Euros;
- SARL Vaccarezza: 9,300 Euros;
- SARL Société d'exploitation des ambulances J. Volpe: 24,000 Euros;
- SARL "Les Taxis de Haute Provence": 3,000 Euros;
- M. Y..., self-employed taxi driver: 560 Euros;
- M. Z..., self-employed taxi driver: 890 Euros.