

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/090
COMPLAINANT	M McDonald
ADVERTISER	Expedia Inc
ADVERTISEMENT	Expedia Inc Television
DATE OF MEETING	27 March 2017
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The television advertisement promoting the Expedia Plus Rewards scheme for Expedia Inc travel company contains several different images of a cross shape being formed, for example; a person standing behind a tree, lifting their arms up and holding them out on either side, four yellow swimming pool rafts coming together to form a cross shape and a surfer lifting his surfboard up and holding it at right angles to their body.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complainant, M McDonald, said:

This is using a symbol of important religious significance: the cross which is the symbol of Christianity. Not only that, but because of its religious connections it is found in all western civilization cemeteries as a grave marker: that includes all the W.W.1 graveyards. It is sacrilege to use it as a commercial promotion.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4.

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern that it is sacrilege to use the symbol of the cross, a symbol for Christianity, as part of a commercial promotion.

The Chair noted that while the cross symbol is a symbol for Christianity, it is also a symbol for other things. The equidistant or square cross, which is used in this advertisement, is also the symbol for the "plus" sign, and in ancient times was referred to as the Greek Cross.

The Chair said the imagery used in the advertisement is also a reference to the loyalty rewards scheme being promoted by Expedia Inc called Expedia Plus Rewards. The imagery is therefore most likely to be depicting a plus sign.

Therefore, the Chair ruled the advertisement had been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and there was no apparent breach of Basic Principle 4 of the Code of Ethics. Accordingly, the Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed**