**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO 796**

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**Dr M J Cardo (DA) to ask the Minister of Economic Development:**

Did the Competition Commission investigate allegations of market dominance by VFS Global in the visa support services market to foreign embassies after the Commission was approached to do so; if not, why not; if so; what were the findings?                   NW915E

**REPLY**

On 29 February 2014 and 27 January 2016 the Commission received complaints related to a visa service provider.

The first complaint was that the visa service provider had allegedly concluded contracts with various foreign governments in terms of which it had been given exclusive rights to provide visa support services, and was charging excessive prices for its visa support services.

After investigating the complaint, the CC decided not to refer the matter to the Competition Tribunal, due to jurisdictional issues relating to the conduct of foreign governments. The Commission also found that the prices that were being charged were in fact aligned with the embassies’ own tendering frameworks.

The Commission did however engage in advocacy efforts with the embassies concerned, to make them aware that such practices could have anti-competitive effects.

On 27 January 2016, the Commission received a complaint that the same company was abusing its dominance in the provision of visa support services to international travellers to South Africa who have to use South African embassies abroad. This complaint is still under investigation by the Commission.

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