

## Carlyle leads private equity ‘glamping’ sale

Javier Espinoza in London

Two private equity funds are cashing in on the trend for glamping with the sale of a combined 40 per cent stake in a European camping company that values the business at roughly €700m.

Carlyle, the Washington-based buyout fund, and Paris-based Montefiore have agreed to sell the minority stake in European Camping Group to Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan (OTTP), one of Canada’s largest pension funds, according to two people familiar with the transaction.

The sale is expected to be announced later on Wednesday, the people said.

Carlyle, Montefiore and management will retain the rest of the shares in the holiday mobile-homes operator, which runs about 20,000 units and roughly 1,000 luxury tents across Europe, mainly in France, Spain, Italy and Croatia.

Buyout groups have been betting on the rise of the “staycation” and families looking for more high-end experiences such as luxury camping, known as “glamping”. In 2016, Canada’s Onex bought Parkdean Resorts, Britain’s biggest holiday park operator, for £1.35bn in another private equity deal focused on caravan parks.

“The market has been very fragmented and therefore it has a lot of room for acquisitions,” said a person with direct knowledge of the ECG transaction.

ECG, which posted revenues of €230m last year, has already seen growth through a classic private equity strategy known as buy-and-build. In 2014, Carlyle acquired Homair camping resorts and Eurocamp simultaneously to form the group. Since then, it has scaled up the business through aggressive digital marketing campaigns.

Ontario Teachers were advised by BNP Paribas, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and KPMG.

Carlyle, Montefiore and European Camping Group were advised by Rothschild, DLA Piper and PwC.

Carlyle and OTTP declined to comment. Montefiore could not immediately be reached for comment.