

**Question for written answer E-000702/2024  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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**Subject:** Digital Markets Act compliance and changes to search results leading to an imbalance in traffic between market players

Google has recently announced that it is testing new solutions for its search results, including a new layout for its search engine results page, new refinement options and rich web results.

In doing so, it appears that Google's solutions may primarily benefit large online travel intermediaries by giving them even more visibility and increased organic traffic at the expense of European hotels' own websites. This will lead to less choice for consumers, fewer direct bookings for hotels and increased intermediation costs in a sector that is mostly made up of SMEs and is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Against this backdrop, in the Commission's view:

1. Are these changes compliant with the Digital Markets Act<sup>1</sup>, as regards both Art. 6(5) and the wider goals of the DMA, such as the fairness and contestability of digital markets for all business users of Google (hotels and online travel intermediaries alike)?
2. Is strengthening the visibility of Booking.com, which the Commission has classed as a dominant company for competition law purposes and which meets the gatekeeper criteria under the DMA, in line with the DMA's overall objectives?
3. Is there sufficient awareness of the economic impact that the proposed changes will have on European hotels, many of which are SMEs or start-ups, and which are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic?

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/1925 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2022 on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector, OJ L 265, 12.10.2022, p. 1.