

BOOKING REMOVES PARITY CLAUSES TO COMPLY WITH THE EU DIGITAL MARKETS ACT



Booking has implemented several changes to comply with the European Economic Area's Digital Markets Act (DMA). These changes include the removal of parity clauses and introducing a new tool along with two information panels aimed at enhancing data access for both partners and users, as stated in an announcement.

The platform was designated as a "gatekeeper " last May, which gave it six months to make the necessary adjustments and meet the DMA requirements.

According to Brussels, **this law ensures that users have more options while browsing the web, giving them greater freedom of choice and fair access to services** offered by major companies.

With the removal of all parity requirements, partners are no longer obligated to offer the same or better rates and conditions on Booking as through other online or offline channels.

Additionally, the company stated that it would not impose any conditions on partners participating in its platform that would prevent them from offering better prices or terms for inventory within the European Economic Area or through other channels.

Booking has introduced a new tool to provide users with "more access and control" over their personal data. This tool is an application programming interface (API) for data portability, which offers travelers on the platform free, efficient, continuous, and real-time access to relevant personal information.

Additionally, this initiative includes improved access for members to data pertinent to their business. To support this, Booking has created two new information panels: one for car rentals and another for attractions.

According to the platform, these new dashboards enhance partners' data availability and allow them to download information in an accessible format.

To comply with the Digital Markets Act's requirements, it is essential to implement additional controls over the flow of personal data within one's business. Booking has emphasized its commitment to transparency in processing personal data, aiming to build and maintain travelers' trust.

In September of last year, Brussels identified six major platforms—Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, ByteDance, Meta, and Microsoft—as "gatekeepers," which means they are already subject to stringent oversight.

HOTREC to Keep an Eye on Booking Holdings

The European umbrella organization HOTREC has strongly supported Booking Holdings' official

designation as a gatekeeper. **According to the association, European hoteliers face numerous unfair business practices and disruptions from Booking.com, which significantly affect their performance.** In May, Markus Luthe, the General Manager of the German Hotel Association (IHA) and Chairman of HOTREC's Distribution Working Group, emphasized the importance of ensuring that the gatekeeper does not evade its new obligations. He also stressed the need for adequate consultation with all affected stakeholders regarding its compliance solutions.

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