

Brandjacking: EU shall show the red card to Google

Brussels, 24 October 2018 – HOTREC, the European umbrella association representing hotels, restaurants, and cafes, is extremely concerned by the developments Google recently announced regarding its policy for brand names. Google announced that any intermediary may freely use the brand names of the traded products in their Google Ads, dictating, using its dominant market position, the rules of trademark policy. European enterprises may thus completely lose control over their brand names, which is one of their most precious property. HOTREC calls on the European Parliament and the Council to put bigger emphasis in the upcoming Regulation on platform to business relations on the protection of European enterprises' rights to have control over their brands.

Google's announcement to allow any online intermediary or information provision service to freely make use of the brand names of products put for advertisement on Google, is clearly an attack on the autonomy of enterprises to exercise control over their intellectual property rights. With this move, rights related to the brand names of businesses suffer a huge decrease in value. Trademark protection thus becomes more and more irrelevant, which must not be acceptable.

"HOTREC calls on the European Parliament and the Council to increase European businesses' brand protection in the current negotiations on the Regulation on platform to business relations, as proposed to both institutions by HOTREC", said Christian de Barrin, CEO of HOTREC.

"The current change in Google's advertising policy will lead to higher advertising costs increasing the profits of Google, without any additional benefit to European businesses or consumers. It will also make impossible for European businesses to have a fair chance to appear in Google advertisements", concluded Markus Luthe, Chair of HOTREC's Distribution Task Force.

What is HOTREC?

HOTREC represents the hotel, restaurant and café industry at European level. The sector counts in total around 1.9 million businesses, being 99,5% small and medium sized enterprises (90% are micro enterprises, i.e. employing less than 10 people). These businesses make up some 60% of value added. The industry provides some 11.1 million jobs in the EU alone. Together with the other tourism industries, the sector is the 3rd largest industry in Europe. HOTREC brings together 44 national associations representing the interest of this industry in 30 different European countries.

For further information: www.hotrec.eu

PRESS CONTACT: Guillaume Brouillet, Guillaume.Brouillet@hotrec.eu, + 32 (0)2 513 63 23