



Platform to business relations – HOTREC welcomes EP draft report: Transparency well addressed, fairness needs further improvement

Brussels, 14 September 2018 – The European Parliament published the IMCO draft report of the rapporteur MEP Christel Schaldemose (S&D, Denmark), proposing further improvements to the Commission proposal for a Regulation on promoting fairness and transparency for business users of online intermediation services from the European businesses' perspective. Together with the already published opinion of the ITRE Committee, current developments aim at rebalancing the existing unequal relationship between online platforms and European businesses. Indeed, transparency is well addressed, while fairness shall need further improvement.

MEP Schaldemose proposes inter alia, that platforms' additional distribution channels or affiliate programmes shall be made transparent to businesses. Furthermore, the report rightly suggests to include in the scope all terms and conditions of platforms, not only the ones unilaterally determined by platforms. Thus, changing a comma would not mean losing protection for businesses. The reference to sector specific codes of conducts of businesses is also welcomed by the European hospitality sector, similarly to the call on the Commission to review the Regulation after already 2 years' time, in this fast changing market.

The already published ITRE opinion, drafted by MEP Anna Záborská (EPP, Slovakia), proposes also several crucial positive improvements for business users and the hospitality sector. Inter alia, she is supporting that online intermediaries shall not restrict the ability of business users to offer the same goods and services under different conditions through other means. Furthermore, she recognizes that the data generated by the business users' activity on the platform shall be fairly shared with those businesses.

"The current proposals for amendments reflected in the so far published EP documents go in the right direction to even further reduce existing imbalances in the European online intermediary markets. However, confirmation on the right for businesses to offer goods and services at different conditions is indeed needed" said Markus Luthe, Chair of HOTREC's Distribution Task Force.

"HOTREC welcomes the Schaldemose report and looks forward to the inclusion of the ITRE recommendations (especially regarding data access and the possibility to offer different conditions) in the final IMCO report as well. We count on the support of the other opinion giving committees and of the Member States to reinforce the approach taken by both the EP IMCO and ITRE rapporteur" concluded Christian de Barrin, CEO of HOTREC.

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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 43 national associations representing the interest of this industry in 30 different European countries.