eu travel tech

eu travel tech Welcomes European Commission's Preliminary Findings in Alphabet's Non-Compliance Investigation

Brussels, 19 March 2025 – eu travel tech welcomes the European Commission's announcement that it has provided preliminary findings to Alphabet Inc. (Alphabet) as part of its ongoing non-compliance investigation under the Digital Markets Act (DMA). This is an important step forward in ensuring that Google ceases treating its own services more favourably than those of third parties. Today's announcement also reaffirms the Commission's commitment to ensuring fair competition and consumer choice in digital markets.

In travel search, Google's online intermediation services—covering hotels, flights, trains, vacation rentals, and more—compete directly with services from other companies including those of as eu travel tech members. More than a year after its deadline to comply with the DMA, Alphabet still violates Article 6 (5) of the DMA by continuing to display Google's travel services on the Search Engine Results Page (SERP) in a far more visually appealing and interactive format than those of third parties.

In recent months, Alphabet has attempted to evade its Art. 6 (5) obligations by engaging in compliance discussions as a delaying tactic, making proposals which did not bring it closer to compliance. More importantly, Alphabet has has sought to stir conflict between travel vertical search services and travel service suppliers, presenting its compliance as a zero-sum game and diverting from the issue: stopping self-preferencing and providing the same access and features to other services as Google provides to its own services. We are also concerned that Google presents its compliance as forcing it to abandon useful user features from the SERP, despite the many other ways in of complying with Art. 6 (5) without degrading the user experience. Overall, this approach has meant that all business users, regardless of where they are based, continue to be disadvantaged by Google's self-preferencing practices.

The preliminary findings confirm that the current displays are not compliant with the DMA and play a key role in clearly delineating the limits of compliance for Alphabet to follow. This comes at a critical juncture in the enforcement of the DMA and the EU's broader goals to keep digital markets contestable for all businesses and consumer choice intact; Alphabet must now quickly comply or be faced with penalties with sufficient deterrence value.

"The preliminary findings are a strong signal to Alphabet that its approach needs to change radically. This is a turning point for the DMA and we look forward to the conclusion of the investigation. By ending Google Search self-preferencing, it can

demonstrate that it can deliver real benefits to all digital businesses, including US ones, as well as European consumers", said Emmanuel Mounier, Secretary General at eu travel tech.

As the investigation continues towards conclusion, we commend the European Commission's willingness to facilitate a compliance solution through dialogue as well as to step in as the enforcer of the DMA. eu travel tech stands ready to support the Commission's efforts to ensure swift compliance with the DMA and to promote a fair, transparent, and competitive online search market for all.

About eu travel tech

eu travel tech represents the interests of travel technology companies. eu travel tech uses its position at the centre of the travel and tourism sector to promote a consumer-driven, innovative and competitive industry that is transparent and sustainable. Our membership spans Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), Online Travel Agencies (OTA), Travel Management Companies in business travel (TMCs) and metasearch sites.