

Summary

European Parliament committees are disagreeing over the allocation of the files making up the New Deal for Consumers, with the main bone of contention being whether the Injunctions Directive is more appropriate for the Consumer Protection committee or the Legal Affairs one.

On the tourism front, TripAdvisor CEO sees the attractions business as a potentially high growth area, while Google held an event in the European Parliament over its Grow Greek Tourism online initiative.

The GDPR entered into force as of 25th May, meaning that data processors and providers must now comply with its stricter provisions, or face fines (but authorities will continue being lenient for a little while longer).

Trilogues on the Accessibility Act continued and, despite disagreement between Council and Parliament over extending its scope to cover tourism, some tourism sectors were eventually included in the updated mandate.

Finally, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg appeared in front of a panel of MEPs to answer questions, following the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

General

Committees disagree over leadership on New Deal for Consumers

Source: Intelligence gathering

There is disagreement between the IMCO and JURI committees over which one should take the lead on the proposals making up the New Deal for Consumers (NDC). JURI is challenging IMCO's ownership, suggesting it is more appropriate for them to take the lead on the Injunctions Directive file. The key issue here is whether the proposal is more related to consumer issues or to legal issues. The Conference of Committee Chairs was expected to convene on 29th May to discuss the issue and possibly reach a decision. At Council, the NDC was discussed 23rd-24th May and on 28th May during the Competitiveness Council.

It is expected that MEPs Dan Dalton (ECR, UK) and Dennis de Jong (GUE / NGL, Netherlands) will lead on the consumer law and the injunctions proposals, respectively, as members of the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection.

Tourism and culture

TripAdvisor sees attractions business as an important growth area

Source: [Skift](#) – 15.05.2018

Skift has reported on comments by Tripadvisor CEO Stephen Kaufer, who noted that the tours and activities sector (including attractions), will be a massive business opportunity. Mr Kaufer's estimate is that attractions will be about half the size of the hotel sector, with Tripadvisor's newly rebranded Tripadvisor Experiences (formerly Tripadvisor Attractions) potentially turning out to be a business worth "up to a couple billion dollars."

TripAdvisor acknowledges that the sector is still in its early days and the company only covers a "small percentage" of activities a visitor can do in a destination. However, the company recently acquired Iceland-based tours and activities tech provider Bokun, which became Tripadvisor's in-house tech company, connecting tour suppliers to its platform. The mother company wants to grow Bokun globally and use its Experiences business as a supplement to its hotel business.

Google event on Greek tourism in the European Parliament

Source: Event attendance

This month an event entitled "Growing the Greek Tourism Sector with digital: The case of Google" was held in the European Parliament. The event was specifically focused on Google's Grow Greek Tourism online platform initiative, which provides training and consulting on using digital to boost the reach of tourism service providers (hotels, restaurants etc.) in Greece. The economic

benefits of tourism for Greece and the effects of Google's programme on the country made up the main crux of the discussion.

Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elzbieta Bienkowska attended part of the event and emphasised that online intermediation services are extremely important for tourism and that the sector needs to keep abreast of new technologies such as AI. Supporting the development of the necessary skills using all available resources from different public funds was also mentioned.

General

GDPR enters into force

Source: Intelligence gathering

On 25th May the General Data Protection Regulation provisions came into force, meaning that data processors and controllers must now comply with the new regulatory regime's stricter rules. It was reported that a number of companies over-reacted to the entry into force, with some websites going as far as temporarily blocking access for European consumers, as they were working to finalise the necessary adjustments.

Although privacy activists already launched a number of cases on privacy violations in various courts, enforcement authorities are understood to be adopting a lenient approach towards breaches in the early stages of the implementation of the GDPR.

Accessibility Act – update from trilogues

Source: Intelligence gathering, [BBC](#) – 24.05.2018

In the latest trilogues on the Accessibility Act in May, the trilogue negotiators also discussed tourism. The EP is more ambitious than the Council or the Commission on this topic and, although they did not find a common understanding, the Council has agreed to include some tourism sectors in the revised mandate. On standards, it was agreed that the Commission will be allowed to adopt technical specifications instead of standards through delegated acts. It was also agreed that not all products will be included in this requirement since standards already exist for certain products. Technical experts are currently working on the technical points ahead of the next trilogue, which is set for 12th June. It is hoped that negotiations will conclude under the Bulgarian Presidency and, if that is the case, adoption will take place before the end of the year.

Elsewhere, the BBC [reported](#) that an 11-year-old severely disabled boy sued the Flambards Theme park in Cornwall over discrimination and failing to make reasonable adjustments for him under the UK Equality Act, specifically on having changing places toilets.

Mark Zuckerberg appears in front of European Parliament

Source: Intelligence gathering, [Politico](#) – 23.05.2018

On 22nd May, Mark Zuckerberg appeared in front of a panel of MEPs to respond to questions about Facebook's privacy policy, in light of the Cambridge Analytica scandal and the GDPR; user data security; his company's role in politics and elections; illegal content online, etc. The session received almost universally negative views. Mr Zuckerberg spent about 25 minutes out of the session's 1.5 hours responding to questions, with MEPs having used up the remainder of the time to ask their questions, widely seen as a chance to grandstand. The format also allowed Mr Zuckerberg to choose which questions to answer and left no time for follow-ups to ensure the topics under discussion were exhausted. The end result left neither side looking good, with Mr Zuckerberg appearing to lack transparency and avoid giving clear answers, while the MEPs appeared incapable of getting responses to the hard questions. Mr Zuckerberg also said that a more comprehensive hearing with another Facebook executive would take place soon.

On the positive side, some commentators thought that the questions were more pertinent than the ones asked by US lawmakers, but the problem lied with format, which allowed Mr Zuckerberg to avoid addressing them.

Facebook subsequently [published](#) written responses to the outstanding questions, a large part of which was taken up by data collection and privacy and the Cambridge Analytica story. Other topics included anti-trust issues, fake accounts, taxation, elections, the neutrality of the platform and third party fact-checkers. The responses were welcomed by European Parliament President Antonio Tajani as "a first set of answers", an indication that more is expected.

EU events

- 5 Jun: AmCham breakfast meeting on collective redress
- 25-27 Jun: UNWTO [2nd World Conference on Smart Destinations](#)
- 10 Jul: AmCham Consumer Affairs Committee plenary
- 27 Sep - World Tourism Day & European Tourism Day, Brussels
- 1-2 Oct - ETF in Vienna