Information release

The EU strengthens consumer protection against new digital practices

The European Commission proposes new rules to combat dark patterns, increase online transparency, and ensure greater protection for consumers and users in the digital environment.

Madrid, 18 de November 2026. The European Commission has recently presented a proposal for a Digital Fairness Act aimed at updating the European legislation that protects EU consumers and addressing growing concerns about the impact that certain digital design techniques may have on consumer behaviour. According to the Commission, certain interfaces and mechanisms used by companies and platforms may make it more difficult for consumers to make free and informed decisions, encourage impulsive purchases, or keep users exposed to certain content and services for longer periods of time.

Among the main new features of the future legislation is the prohibition of so-called “dark patterns”, namely design strategies that manipulate or pressure users into making decisions that they might not otherwise take. The proposal also seeks to provide Member States with stronger tools to tackle unfair practices, strengthen enforcement across the Single Market, and simplify the rules that businesses must follow, thereby improving compliance. In addition, transparency obligations regarding the operation of certain digital tools and the criteria used to present offers, recommendations or personalised prices will be reinforced.

The proposal pays particular attention to the protection of minors and other vulnerable groups. In this regard, it introduces specific restrictions on certain practices found in video games and digital applications that may encourage excessive spending or generate compulsive behaviour, such as “pay to win” or “pay to progress” mechanisms. It also establishes measures to improve the transparency of advertising disseminated through content creators and influencers, with the aim of ensuring that users can clearly identify when they are being presented with a commercial communication and thus prevent the exploitation of minors’ trust.

The European Commission also proposes new safeguards against unwanted automatic subscription renewals, as well as against free trials that end up becoming misleading subscriptions. To this end, the proposal seeks to make it easier for consumers to cancel digital services and to prevent mechanisms that hinder contract termination or favour automatic renewals without users’ consent.

Another key pillar of the initiative is increased transparency in digital markets. Businesses will be required to provide clearer and more transparent information about prices, including those that use dynamic pricing systems, virtual queues, virtual in-app currencies, or other mechanisms that are becoming increasingly common in digital environments.

For consumer organisations, this reform represents an important step towards adapting citizens’ rights to the new realities of the digital marketplace. The objective is to ensure that technological innovation is accompanied by a high level of consumer protection, fostering a fairer, safer and more transparent digital environment.

The proposal must now follow the European legislative procedure and be examined by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union before its final adoption.

Source of information: European Commission.

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