Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

DAF/COMP/M(2026)2/ANN2/FINAL

Unclassified

English - Or. English

12 November 2026

DIRECTORATE FOR FINANCIAL AND ENTERPRISE AFFAIRS
COMPETITION COMMITTEE

Executive Summary of the Roundtable on Competition and Consumer Policy in Digital Markets

Annex to the Summary Record of the 149th meeting of the Competition Committee

24 June 2026

This Executive Summary by the OECD Secretariat contains the key findings from the discussion of the Roundtable on Competition and Consumer Policy in Digital Markets held during the 149th meeting of the Competition Committee held on 24 June 2026.

More documents related to this discussion can be found at:
https://www.oecd.org/en/events/2026/06/competition-and-consumer-policy-in-digital-markets.html

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JT03597970

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Executive Summary of the Roundtable on Competition and Consumer Policy in Digital Markets

By the Secretariat[1]

On 24 June 2026, the OECD Competition Committee held a roundtable to discuss the interaction between competition and consumer policy in digital markets. Taking into account the background note prepared by the OECD Secretariat, the written contributions, as well as the discussion by the expert panelists, the following key points emerged:

1. Digital markets blur the boundaries between competition and consumer policy because the same business practices may simultaneously shape consumer decision-making and competitive dynamics.

Digital markets are environments in which firms compete through prices, quality and innovation, but also through the design and presentation of choices, including rankings, defaults and personalised offers. Effective competition therefore depends on consumers being able to identify relevant differences between offerings and to act on them, including by switching providers. In digital markets, practices that distort informed consumer choice may weaken both consumer trust and competition.

AI-driven practices, for example may deliver benefits such as improved targeting, cost efficiency and safety monitoring. However, they can also raise concerns around content authenticity, including misleading AI-generated product information and endorsements. Practices such as drip pricing, cancellation friction, misleading rankings, misleading AI-generated product images and deepfake endorsements, as well as pre-selected options and other forms of online choice architecture practices, may in some cases cause negative impacts on consumer decisions and affect competition. They can also contribute to the entrenchment of market power and have therefore been subject to enforcement action by competition authorities. Product safety concerns also arise where online marketplaces allow non-compliant products to reach consumers rapidly and at scale, often from sellers with limited accountability. This can undermine trust and distort competition by allowing sellers who do not invest in product safety to gain an advantage over rivals that bear the investment costs.

Multiple delegations presented cases in which a single course of conduct engaged both policy areas. In some cases, proceedings were conducted simultaneously under both legal frameworks, while in others they were brought under only one. While simultaneous enforcement may raise concerns about double enforcement, principles-based action focused on the nature of the harm can reduce this risk. In these cases, distinguishing market power concerns from individual consumer harm is key.

2. Experience shows that effective co-ordination mechanisms matter more than institutional design, whether mandates are unified or separate.

Delegations described a spectrum of institutional arrangements. Some authorities have dual or multiple mandates, while in other jurisdictions these mandates are divided among different agencies, including at the subnational level. The shared lesson was that a dual mandate does not by itself ensure integration, and that institutional design matters less than

[1] This Executive Summary does not necessarily represent the consensus view of the Competition Committee. It does, however, encapsulate key points from the discussion.

the co-ordination mechanisms in place. From informal discussions to structured co-operation, three forms of co-ordination were identified: aligning enforcement priorities and case allocation; pursuing joint policy initiatives such as guidelines or market studies; and advanced co-operation through joint investigations and co-ordinated remedies.

Existing networks (e.g. such as the International Competition Network or the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network) are often siloed across competition, consumer and data protection mandates, although some jurisdictions have developed cross-domain mechanisms. One gap identified was the difficulty of translating research co-operation and joint studies into co-ordinated enforcement action.

3. Consumer agency bridges the two policy fields. While competition policy helps ensure a meaningful range of options, consumer policy helps ensure that consumers can choose effectively among them.

Consumer agency can be understood as the ability of consumers to make independent and effective choices. Framed this way, it bridges the two policy fields. Competition policy works to ensure that genuine alternatives exist in the market in the first place, while consumer policy works to ensure that consumers can actually perceive, compare and act on those alternatives. The discussion revealed that, in digital markets, neither dimension is often sufficient on its own: competing products may exist, but consumers may still be unable to choose effectively if choice architecture, information asymmetries or manipulation distort their decisions. Conversely, even well-informed consumers cannot exercise meaningful choice where no real alternatives exist.

This framing maps onto two distinct but increasingly overlapping types of market failure. External market failures, such as the entrenchment of market power, fall within the traditional remit of competition policy. Internal decision-making distortions, such as the exploitation of behavioural biases through deceptive or misleading presentation, fall within the remit of consumer policy. In digital markets, these failures converge because the same practices can simultaneously narrow the range of available options and impair the consumer's capacity to navigate them.

The discussion underscored that this convergence is intensifying with the spread of data-driven personalisation and AI systems, which can steer consumers toward towards outcomes preferred by businesses and reduce the visibility of alternatives. Agentic AI, which involves AI systems acting on behalf of consumers, may further compress the effective choice set. Placing consumer welfare at the centre of the analysis therefore helps authorities recognise when a single practice engages both policy domains, and supports more integrated approaches to diagnosis, enforcement and remedy design.

4. Behavioural insights are increasingly embedded in enforcement, reflecting recognition that assessing the overall effects of digital-market conduct on both consumers and competition is increasingly complex.

The discussion highlighted the value of recognising the distinct roles of competition and consumer authorities while developing practical co-operation mechanisms and tools suited to digital markets. Behavioural insights were singled out as useful for understanding the effects of conduct and for designing remedies that address both demand- and supply-side concerns.

Multiple authorities reported integrating behavioural analysis directly into enforcement. In some cases, expert groups on behavioural economics have been formed to support enforcement activity and research. This point was supported by several studies finding that digital environments are often designed to exploit behavioural biases, which can distort demand and strengthen market power.

Behavioural considerations also emerged as important in remedy design, where an approach that considers both the impact on competition and consumers' interests is important for ensuring the effectiveness of remedies. For example, reliance on consumer choice mechanisms, such as consent, may be insufficient where consumers exhibit bounded rationality. Innovative remedies that take account of these biases are necessary to ensure that remedies achieve their intended effect.